



Alfred Tennyson

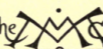








THE WORKS OF  
ALFRED  
LORD TENNYSON

•The  Co. •

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THE WORKS OF  
ALFRED  
LORD TENNYSON

POET LAUREATE

*W. P. Smith*

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TO THE QUEEN.

Revered, beloved— O you that hold  
A nobler office upon earth  
Than arms, or power of brain, or birth  
Could give the warrior kings of old,

Victoria, — since your Royal grace  
To one of less desert allows  
This laurel greener from the brows  
Of him that utter'd nothing base ;

And should your greatness, and the care  
That yokes with empire, yield you time  
To make demand of modern rhyme  
If aught of ancient worth be there ;

Then — while a sweeter music wakes,  
And thro' wild March the throstle calls,  
Where all about your palace-walls  
The sun-lit almond-blossom shakes —

Take, Madam, this poor book of song ;  
For tho' the faults were thick as dust  
In vacant chambers, I could trust  
Your kindness. May you rule us long,

And leave us rulers of your blood  
As noble till the latest day !  
May children of our children say,  
' She wrought her people lasting good ;

' Her court was pure ; her life serene ;  
God gave her peace ; her land reposed ;  
A thousand claims to reverence closed  
In her as Mother, Wife, and Queen ;

' And statesmen at her council met  
Who knew the seasons when to take  
Occasion by the hand, and make  
The bounds of freedom wider yet

' By shaping some august decree,  
Which kept her throne unshaken still,  
Broad-based upon her people's will,  
And compass'd by the inviolate sea.'

March, 1851.

## JUVENILIA.

### CLARIBEL.

#### A MELODY.

##### I.

WHERE Claribel low-lieth  
The breezes pause and die,  
Letting the rose-leaves fall:  
But the solemn oak-tree sigheth,  
Thick-leaved, ambrosial,  
With an ancient melody  
Of an inward agony,  
Where Claribel low-lieth.

##### II.

At eve the beetle boometh  
Athwart the thicket lone:  
At noon the wild bee hummeth  
About the moss'd headstone:  
At midnight the moon cometh,  
And looketh down alone.  
Her song the lintwhite swelleth,  
The clear-voiced mavis dwelleth,  
The callow throstle lispeth,  
The slumbrous wave outwelleth,  
The babbling runnel crispeth,  
The hollow grot replieth  
Where Claribel low-lieth.

### NOTHING WILL DIE.

WHEN will the stream be aweary of  
flowing  
Under my eye?  
When will the wind be aweary of blowing  
Over the sky?

When will the clouds be aweary of  
fleeting?

When will the heart be aweary of  
beating?

And nature die?

Never, oh! never, nothing will die;

The stream flows,

The wind blows,

The cloud fleets,

The heart beats,

Nothing will die.

Nothing will die;

All things will change

Thro' eternity.

'Tis the world's winter;

Autumn and summer

Are gone long ago;

Earth is dry to the centre,

But spring, a new comer,

A spring rich and strange,

Shall make the winds blow

Round and round,

Thro' and thro',

Here and there,

Till the air

And the ground

Shall be fill'd with life anew.

The world was never made;

It will change, but it will not fade.

So let the wind range;

For even and morn

Ever will be

Thro' eternity.

Nothing was born;

Nothing will die;

All things will change.

## ALL THINGS WILL DIE.

CLEARLY the blue river chimes in its  
flowing

Under my eye ;

Warmly and broadly the south winds are  
blowing

Over the sky.

One after another the white clouds are  
fleeting ;

Every heart this May morning in joyance  
is beating

Full merrily ;

Yet all things must die.

The stream will cease to flow ;

The wind will cease to blow ;

The clouds will cease to fleet ;

The heart will cease to beat ;

For all things must die.

All things must die.

Spring will come never more.

Oh ! vanity !

Death waits at the door.

See ! our friends are all forsaking

The wine and the merrymaking.

We are call'd — we must go.

Laid low, very low,

In the dark we must lie.

The merry glees are still ;

The voice of the bird

Shall no more be heard,

Nor the wind on the hill.

Oh ! misery !

Hark ! death is calling

While I speak to ye,

The jaw is falling,

The red cheek paling,

The strong limbs failing ;

Ice with the warm blood mixing ;

The eyeballs fixing.

Nine times goes the passing bell :

Ye merry souls, farewell.

The old earth

Had a birth,

As all men know,

Long ago.

And the old earth must die.

So let the warm winds range,

And the blue wave beat the shore ;

For even and morn

Ye will never see

Thro' eternity.

All things were born.

Ye will come never more,

For all things must die.\*

## LEONINE ELEGIACS.

LOW-FLOWING breezes are roaming the  
broad valley dimm'd in the gloaming :  
Thro' the black-stemm'd pines only the  
far river shines.

Creeping thro' blossomy rushes and bowers  
of rose-blowing bushes,

Down by the poplar tall rivulets babble  
and fall.

Barketh the shepherd-dog cheerly ; the  
grasshopper carolleteth clearly ;

Deeply the wood-dove coos ; shrilly the  
owlet halloos ;

Winds creep ; dews fall chilly : in her  
first sleep earth breathes stilly :

Over the pools in the burn water-gnats  
murmur and mourn.

Sadly the far kine loweth : the glimmer-  
ing water outfloweth :

Twin peaks shadow'd with pine slope to  
the dark hyaline.

Low-throned Hesper is stayed between  
the two peaks ; but the Naiad  
throbbing in mild unrest holds him  
beneath in her breast.

The ancient poetess singeth, that Hes-  
perus all things bringeth,

Smoothing the wearied mind : bring me  
my love, Rosalind.

Thou comest morning or even ; she  
cometh not morning or even.

False-eyed Hesper, unkind, where is my  
sweet Rosalind ?

## SUPPOSED CONFESSIONS

OF A SECOND-RATE SENSITIVE MIND.

O GOD ! my God ! have mercy now.

I faint, I fall. Men say that Thou

Didst die for me, for such as *me*,

Patient of ill, and death, and scorn,

And that my sin was as a thorn

Among the thorns that girt Thy brow,

Wounding Thy soul. — That even now,

In this extremest misery

Of ignorance, I should require  
 A sign! and if a bolt of fire  
 Would rive the slumbrous summer noon  
 While I do pray to Thee alone,  
 Think my belief would stronger grow!  
 Is not my human pride brought low?  
 The boastings of my spirit still?  
 The joy I had in my freewill  
 All cold, and dead, and corpse-like grown?  
 And what is left to me, but Thou,  
 And faith in Thee? Men pass me by;  
 Christians with happy countenances—  
 And children all seem full of Thee!  
 And women smile with saint-like glances  
 Like Thine own mother's when she bow'd  
 Above Thee, on that happy morn  
 When angels spake to men aloud,  
 And Thou and peace to earth were born.  
 Goodwill to me as well as all—  
 O one of them: my brothers they:  
 Brothers in Christ—a world of peace  
 And confidence, day after day;  
 And trust and hope till things should cease,  
 And then one Heaven receive us all.

How sweet to have a common faith!  
 To hold a common scorn of death!  
 And at a burial to hear  
 The creaking cords which wound and eat  
 Into my human heart, whene'er  
 Earth goes to earth, with grief, not fear,  
 With hopeful grief, were passing sweet!

Thrice happy state again to be  
 The trustful infant on the knee!  
 Who lets his rosy fingers play  
 About his mother's neck, and knows  
 Nothing beyond his mother's eyes.  
 They comfort him by night and day;  
 They light his little life away;  
 He hath no thought of coming woes;  
 He hath no care of life or death;  
 Scarce outward signs of joy arise,  
 Because the Spirit of happiness  
 And perfect rest so inward is;  
 And loveth so his innocent heart,  
 Her temple and her place of birth,  
 Where she would ever wish to dwell,  
 Life of the fountain there, beneath  
 Its salient springs, and far apart,  
 Hating to wander out on earth,  
 Or breathe into the hollow air,  
 Whose chillness would make visible

Her subtil, warm, and golden breath,  
 Which mixing with the infant's blood,  
 Fulfils him with beatitude.  
 Oh! sure it is a special care  
 Of God, to fortify from doubt,  
 To arm in proof, and guard about  
 With triple-mail'd trust, and clear  
 Delight, the infant's dawning year.

Would that my gloomed fancy were  
 As thine, my mother, when with brows  
 Propt on thy knees, my hands upheld  
 In thine, I listen'd to thy vows,  
 For me outpour'd in holiest prayer—  
 For me unworthy!—and beheld  
 Thy mild deep eyes upraised, that knew  
 The beauty and repose of faith,  
 And the clear spirit shining thro'.

Oh! wherefore do we grow awry  
 From roots which strike so deep? why  
 dare

Paths in the desert? Could not I  
 Bow myself down, where thou hast knelt,  
 To the earth—until the ice would melt  
 Here, and I feel as thou hast felt?  
 What Devil had the heart to scathe  
 Flowers thou hadst rear'd—to brush the  
 dew

From thine own lily, when thy grave  
 Was deep, my mother, in the clay?  
 Myself? Is it thus? Myself? Had I  
 So little love for thee? But why  
 Prevail'd not thy pure prayers? Why  
 pray

To one who heeds not, who can save  
 But will not? Great in faith, and strong  
 Against the grief of circumstance  
 Wert thou, and yet unheard. What if  
 Thou pleadest still, and seest me drive  
 Thro' utter dark a full-sail'd skiff,  
 Unpiloted i' the echoing dance  
 Of reboant whirlwinds, stooping low  
 Unto the death, not sunk! I know  
 At matins and at evensong,  
 That thou, if thou wert yet alive,  
 In deep and daily prayers would'st strive  
 To reconcile me with thy God.  
 Albeit, my hope is gray, and cold  
 At heart, thou wouldest murmur still—  
 'Bring this lamb back into Thy fold,  
 My Lord, if so it be Thy will.'  
 Would'st tell me I must brook the rod  
 And chastisement of human pride;

That pride, the sin of devils, stood  
Betwixt me and the light of God!  
That hitherto I had defied  
And had rejected God — that grace  
Would drop from his o'er-brimming love,  
As manna on my wilderness,  
If I would pray — that God would move  
And strike the hard, hard rock, and  
thence,

Sweet in their utmost bitterness,  
Would issue tears of penitence  
Which would keep green hope's life.  
Alas!

I think that pride hath now no place  
Nor sojourn in me. I am void,  
Dark, formless, utterly destroyed.

Why not believe then? Why not yet  
Anchor thy frailty there, where man  
Hath moor'd and rested? Ask the sea  
At midnight, when the crisp slope waves  
After a tempest, rib and fret  
The broad-imbas'd beach, why he  
Slumbers not like a mountain tarn?  
Wherefore his ridges are not curls  
And ripples of an inland mere?  
Wherefore he moaneth thus, nor can  
Draw down into his vexed pools  
All that blue heaven which hues and  
paves

The other? I am too forlorn,  
Too shaken: my own weakness fools  
My judgment, and my spirit whirls,  
Moved from beneath with doubt and fear.

'Yet,' said I, in my morn of youth,  
The unsunn'd freshness of my strength,  
When I went forth in quest of truth,  
'It is man's privilege to doubt,  
If so be that from doubt at length,  
Truth may stand forth unmoved of  
change,

An image with profulgent brows,  
And perfect limbs, as from the storm  
Of running fires and fluid range  
Of lawless airs, at last stood out  
This excellence and solid form  
Of constant beauty. For the Ox  
Feeds in the herb, and sleeps, or fills  
The horned valleys all about,  
And hollows of the fringed hills  
In summer heats, with placid lows  
Unfearing, till his own blood flows

About his hoof. And in the flocks  
The lamb rejoiceth in the year,  
And raceth freely with his fere,  
And answers to his mother's calls  
From the flower'd furrow. In a time,  
Of which he wots not, run short pains  
Thro' his warm heart; and then, from  
whence

He knows not, on his light there falls  
A shadow; and his native slope,  
Where he was wont to leap and climb,  
Floats from his sick and filmed eyes,  
And something in the darkness draws  
His forehead earthward, and he dies.  
Shall man live thus, in joy and hope  
As a young lamb, who cannot dream,  
Living, but that he shall live on?  
Shall we not look into the laws  
Of life and death, and things that seem,  
And things that be, and analyse  
Our double nature, and compare  
All creeds till we have found the one,  
If one there be?' Ay me! I fear  
All may not doubt, but everywhere  
Some must clasp Idols. Yet, my God,  
Whom call I Idol? Let Thy dove  
Shadow me over, and my sins  
Be unremember'd, and Thy love  
Enlighten me. Oh teach me yet  
Somewhat before the heavy clod  
Weights on me, and the busy fret  
Of that sharp-headed worm begins  
In the gross blackness underneath.

O weary life! O weary death!  
O spirit and heart made desolate!  
O damned vacillating state!

#### THE KRAKEN.

BELOW the thunders of the upper deep;  
Far, far beneath in the abysmal sea,  
His ancient, dreamless, uninvaded sleep  
The Kraken sleepeth: faintest sunlights  
flee

About his shadowy sides: above him swell  
Huge sponges of millennial growth and  
height;

And far away into the sickly light,  
From many a wondrous grot and secret  
cell

Unnumber'd and enormous polypi

Winnow with giant arms the slumbering  
green.

There hath he lain for ages and will lie  
Battening upon huge seaworms in his  
sleep,

Until the latter fire shall heat the deep;  
Then once by man and angels to be seen,  
In roaring he shall rise and on the sur-  
face die.

## SONG.

THE winds, as at their hour of birth,  
Leaning upon the ridged sea,  
Breathed low around the rolling earth  
With mellow preludes, 'We are free.'

The streams through many a lilled row  
Down-carolling to the crisped sea,  
Low-tinkled with a bell-like flow  
Atween the blossoms, 'We are free.'

## LILIAN.

## I.

AIRY, fairy Lilian,  
Flitting, fairy Lilian,  
When I ask her if she love me,  
Claps her tiny hands above me,  
Laughing all she can;  
She'll not tell me if she love me,  
Cruel little Lilian.

## II.

When my passion seeks  
Pleasance in love-sighs,  
She, looking thro' and thro' me  
Thoroughly to undo me,  
Smiling, never speaks:  
So innocent-arch, so cunning-simple,  
From beneath her gathered wimple  
Glancing with black-beaded eyes,  
Till the lightning laughters dimple  
The baby-roses in her cheeks;  
Then away she flies.

## III.

Prythee weep, May Lilian!  
Gaiety without eclipse  
Wearieth me, May Lilian:

Thro' my very heart it thrilleth  
When from crimson-threaded lips  
Silver-treble laughter trilleth:  
Prythee weep, May Lilian.

## IV.

Praying all I can,  
If prayers will not hush thee,  
Airy Lilian,  
Like a rose-leaf I will crush thee,  
Fairy Lilian.

## ISABEL.

## I.

EYES not down-dropt nor over-bright,  
but fed  
With the clear-pointed flame of chastity,  
Clear, without heat, undying, tended by  
Pure vestal thoughts in the trans-  
lucent fane  
Of her still spirit; locks not wide-dispread,  
Madonna-wise on either side her  
head;  
Sweet lips whereon perpetually did  
reign  
The summer calm of golden charity,  
Were fixed shadows of thy fixed mood,  
Revered Isabel, the crown and head,  
The stately flower of female fortitude,  
Of perfect wifehood and pure lowli-  
head.

## II.

The intuitive decision of a bright  
And thorough-edged intellect to part  
Error from crime; a prudence to  
withhold;  
The laws of marriage character'd in  
gold  
Upon the blanched tablets of her heart;  
A love still burning upward, giving light  
To read those laws; an accent very low  
In blandishment, but a most silver flow  
Of subtle-paced counsel in distress,  
Right to the heart and brain, tho' unde-  
scribed,  
Winning its way with extreme gentle-  
ness  
Thro' all the outworks of suspicious  
pride;



A courage to endure and to obey;  
A hate of gossip parlance, and of sway,  
Crown'd Isabel, thro' all her placid life,  
The queen of marriage, a most perfect  
wife.

## III.

The mellow'd reflex of a winter moon;  
A clear stream flowing with a muddy one,  
Till in its onward current it absorbs  
With swifter movement and in purer  
light

The vexed eddies of its wayward  
brother:

A leaning and upbearing parasite,  
Clothing the stem, which else had  
fallen quite

With cluster'd flower-bells and am-  
brosial orbs

Of rich fruit-bunches leaning on  
each other —

Shadow forth thee: — the world hath  
not another

(Tho' all her fairest forms are types of  
thee,

And thou of God in thy great charity)  
Of such a finish'd chasten'd purity.

## MARIANA.

'Mariana in the moated grange.'  
*Measure for Measure.*

WITH blackest moss the flower-plots  
Were thickly crusted, one and all:  
The rusted nails fell from the knots  
That held the pear to the gable-wall.  
The broken sheds look'd sad and strange:

Unlifted was the clinking latch;

Weeded and worn the ancient thatch  
Upon the lonely moated grange.

She only said, 'My life is dreary,

He cometh not,' she said;

She said, 'I am aweary, aweary,

I would that I were dead!'

Her tears fell with the dews at even;  
Her tears fell ere the dews were dried;  
She could not look on the sweet heaven,  
Either at morn or eventide.

After the fitting of the bats,

When thickest dark did trance the sky,  
She drew her casement curtain by,  
And glanced athwart the glooming flats.

She only said, 'The night is dreary,  
He cometh not,' she said;  
She said, 'I am aweary, aweary  
I would that I were dead!'

Upon the middle of the night,  
Waking she heard the night-fowl crow:  
The cock sung out an hour ere light:  
From the dark fen the oxen's low  
Came to her: without hope of change,  
In sleep she seem'd to walk forlorn,  
Till cold winds woke the gray-eyed morn  
About the lonely moated grange.

She only said, 'The day is dreary,  
He cometh not,' she said;

She said, 'I am aweary, aweary,  
I would that I were dead!'

About a stone-cast from the wall  
A sluice with blacken'd waters slept,  
And o'er it many, round and small,  
The cluster'd marsh-mosses crept.  
Hard by a poplar shook alway,  
All silver-green with gnarled bark:  
For leagues no other tree did mark  
The level waste, the rounding gray.

She only said, 'My life is dreary,  
He cometh not,' she said;

She said, 'I am aweary, aweary,  
I would that I were dead!'

And ever when the moon was low,  
And the shrill winds were up and away,  
In the white curtain, to and fro,  
She saw the gusty shadow sway.  
But when the moon was very low,  
And wild winds bound within their cell,  
The shadow of the poplar fell  
Upon her bed, across her brow.

She only said, 'The night is dreary,  
He cometh not,' she said;

She said, 'I am aweary, aweary,  
I would that I were dead!'

All day within the dreamy house,  
The doors upon their hinges creak'd;  
The blue fly sung in the pane; the mouse  
Behind the mouldering wainscot  
shriek'd,

Or from the crevice peer'd about.

Old faces glimmer'd thro' the doors,  
Old footsteps trod the upper floors,  
Old voices called her from without.

She only said, 'My life is dreary,  
He cometh not,' she said;  
She said, 'I am aweary, aweary,  
I would that I were dead!'

The sparrow's chirrup on the roof,  
The slow clock ticking, and the sound  
Which to the wooing wind aloof  
The poplar made, did all confound  
Her sense; but most she loathed the hour  
When the thick-moted sunbeam lay  
Athwart the chambers, and the day  
Was sloping toward his western bower.  
Then, said she, 'I am very dreary,  
He will not come,' she said;  
She wept, 'I am aweary, aweary,  
Oh God, that I were dead!'

TO —.

I.

CLEAR-HEADED friend, whose joyful scorn,  
Edged with sharp laughter, cuts atwain  
The knots that tangle human creeds,  
The wounding cords that bind and strain  
The heart until it bleeds,  
Ray-fringed eyelids of the morn  
Roof not a glance so keen as thine:  
If aught of prophecy be mine,  
Thou wilt not live in vain.

II.

Low-cowering shall the Sophist sit;  
Falsehood shall bare her plaited brow:  
Fair-fronted Truth shall droop not now  
With shrilling shafts of subtle wit.  
Nor martyr-flames, nor trenchant swords,  
Can do away that ancient lie;  
A gentler death shall Falsehood die,  
Shot thro' and thro' with cunning words.

III.

Weak Truth a-leaning on her crutch,  
Wan, wasted Truth in her utmost need,  
Thy kingly intellect shall feed,  
Until she be an athlete bold,  
And weary with a finger's touch  
Those writhed limbs of lightning speed;  
Like that strange angel which of old,  
Until the breaking of the light,

Wrestled with wandering Israel,  
Past Yabbok broke the livelong night,  
And heaven's mazed signs stood still  
In the dim tract of Penuel.

MADELINE.

I.

THOU art not steep'd in golden languors,  
No tranced summer calm is thine,  
Ever varying Madeline.  
Thro' light and shadow thou dost  
range,  
Sudden glances, sweet and strange,  
Delicious spites and darling angers,  
And airy forms of flitting change.

II.

Smiling, frowning, evermore,  
Thou art perfect in love-lore.  
Revealing deep and clear are thine  
Of wealthy smiles: but who may know  
Whether smile or frown be fleeter?  
Whether smile or frown be sweeter,  
Who may know?  
Frowns perfect-sweet along the brow  
Light-glooming over eyes divine,  
Like little clouds sun-fringed, are thine,  
Ever varying Madeline.  
Thy smile and frown are not aloof  
From one another,  
Each to each is dearest brother;  
Hues of the silken sheeny woof  
Momently shot into each other.  
All the mystery is thine;  
Smiling, frowning, evermore,  
Thou art perfect in love-lore,  
Ever varying Madeline.

III.

A subtle, sudden flame,  
By veering passion fann'd,  
About thee breaks and dances:  
When I would kiss thy hand,  
The flush of anger'd shame  
O'erflows thy calmer glances,  
And o'er black brows drops down  
A sudden-curved frown:  
But when I turn away,  
Thou, willing me to stay,  
Woorest not, nor vainly wranglest;

But, looking fixedly the while,  
 All my bounden heart entanglest  
 In a golden-netted smile;  
 Then in madness and in bliss,  
 If my lips should dare to kiss  
 Thy taper fingers amorously,  
 Again thou blushest angerly;  
 And o'er black brows drops down  
 A sudden-curved frown.

## SONG—THE OWL.

## I.

WHEN cats run home and light is come,  
 And dew is cold upon the ground,  
 And the far-off stream is dumb,  
 And the whirring sail goes round,  
 And the whirring sail goes round;  
 Alone and warming his five wits,  
 The white owl in the belfry sits.

## II.

When merry milkmaids click the latch,  
 And rarely smells the new-mown hay,  
 And the cock hath sung beneath the  
 thatch  
 Twice or thrice his roundelay,  
 Twice or thrice his roundelay;  
 Alone and warming his five wits,  
 The white owl in the belfry sits.

## SECOND SONG.

## TO THE SAME.

## I.

THY tuwhits are lull'd, I wot,  
 Thy tuwhoos of yesternight,  
 Which upon the dark afloat,  
 So took echo with delight,  
 So took echo with delight,  
 That her voice untuneful grown,  
 Wears all day a fainter tone.

## II.

I would mock thy chaunt anew;  
 But I cannot mimic it;  
 Not a whit of thy tuwhoo,  
 Thee to woo to thy tuwhit,  
 Thee to woo to thy tuwhit,  
 With a lengthen'd loud halloo,  
 Tuwhoo, tuwhit, tuwhit, tuwhoo-o-o.

RECOLLECTIONS OF THE  
ARABIAN NIGHTS.

WHEN the breeze of a joyful dawn blew  
 free

In the silken sail of infancy,  
 The tide of time flow'd back with me,  
 The forward-flowing tide of time;  
 And many a sheeny summer-morn,  
 Adown the Tigris I was borne,  
 By Bagdat's shrines of fretted gold,  
 High-walled gardens green and old;  
 True Mussulman was I and sworn,  
 For it was in the golden prime  
 Of good Haroun Alraschid.

Anight my shallop, rustling thro'  
 The low and bloomed foliage, drove  
 The fragrant, glistening deeps, and clove  
 The citron-shadows in the blue:  
 By garden porches on the brim,  
 The costly doors flung open wide,  
 Gold glittering thro' lamplight dim,  
 And broider'd sofas on each side:  
 In sooth it was a goodly time,  
 For it was in the golden prime  
 Of good Haroun Alraschid.

Often, where clear-stemm'd platans  
 guard  
 The outlet, did I turn away  
 The boat-head down a broad canal  
 From the main river sluiced, where all  
 The sloping of the moon-lit sward  
 Was damask-work, and deep inlay  
 Of braided blooms unmown, which  
 crept  
 Adown to where the water slept  
 A goodly place, a goodly time,  
 For it was in the golden prime  
 Of good Haroun Alraschid.

A motion from the river won  
 Ridged the smooth level, bearing on  
 My shallop thro' the star-strown calm,  
 Until another night in night  
 I enter'd, from the clearer light,  
 Imbower'd vaults of pillar'd palm,  
 Imprisoning sweets, which, as they  
 clomb  
 Heavenward, were stay'd beneath the  
 dome

Of hollow boughs. — A goodly time,  
For it was in the golden prime  
Of good Haroun Alraschid.

Still onward; and the clear canal  
Is rounded to as clear a lake.  
From the green rivage many a fall  
Of diamond rillets musical,  
Thro' little crystal arches low  
Down from the central fountain's flow  
Fall'n silver-chiming, seemed to shake  
The sparkling flints beneath the prow.

A goodly place, a goodly time,  
For it was in the golden prime  
Of good Haroun Alraschid.

Above thro' many a bowery turn  
A walk with vary-colour'd shells  
Wander'd engrain'd. On either side  
All round about the fragrant marge  
From fluted vase, and brazen urn  
In order, eastern flowers large,  
Some dropping low their crimson bells  
Half-closed, and others studded wide

With disks and tiars, fed the time  
With odour in the golden prime  
Of good Haroun Alraschid.

Far off, and where the lemon grove  
In closest coverture upsprung,  
The living airs of middle night  
Died round the bulbul as he sung;  
Not he: but something which possess'd  
The darkness of the world, delight,  
Life, anguish, death, immortal love,  
Ceasing not, mingled, unrepress'd,  
Apart from place, withholding time,  
But flattering the golden prime  
Of good Haroun Alraschid.

Black the garden-bowers and grots  
Slumber'd: the solemn palms were  
ranged

Above, unwoo'd of summer wind:  
A sudden splendour from behind  
Flush'd all the leaves with rich gold-  
green,

And, flowing rapidly between  
Their interspaces, counterchanged  
The level lake with diamond-plots  
Of dark and bright. A lovely time,  
For it was in the golden prime  
Of good Haroun Alraschid.

Dark-blue the deep sphere overhead,  
Distinct with vivid stars inlaid,  
Grew darker from that under-flame:  
So, leaping lightly from the boat,  
With silver anchor left afloat,  
In marvel whence that glory came  
Upon me, as in sleep I sank  
In cool soft turf upon the bank,  
Entranced with that place and time,  
So worthy of the golden prime  
Of good Haroun Alraschid.

Thence thro' the garden I was drawn —  
A realm of pleasance, many a mound,  
And many a shadow-chequer'd lawn  
Full of the city's stilly sound,  
And deep myrrh-thickets blowing round  
The stately cedar, tamarisks,  
Thick rosaries of scented thorn,  
Tall orient shrubs, and obelisks  
Graven with emblems of the time,  
In honour of the golden prime  
Of good Haroun Alraschid.

With dazed vision unawares  
From the long alley's latticed shade  
Emerged, I came upon the great  
Pavilion of the Caliphat.  
Right to the carven cedarn doors,  
Flung inward over spangled floors,  
Broad-based flights of marble stairs  
Ran up with golden balustrade,  
After the fashion of the time,  
And humour of the golden prime  
Of good Haroun Alraschid.

The fourscore windows all alight  
As with the quintessence of flame,  
A million tapers flaring bright  
From twisted silvers look'd to shame  
The hollow-vaulted dark, and stream'd  
Upon the mooned domes aloof  
In inmost Bagdat, till there seem'd  
Hundreds of crescents on the roof  
Of night new-risen, that marvellous time  
To celebrate the golden prime  
Of good Haroun Alraschid.

Then stole I up, and trancedly  
Gazed on the Persian girl alone,  
Serene with argent-lidded eyes  
Amorous, and lashes like to rays  
Of darkness, and a brow of pearl

Tressed with redolent ebony,  
 In many a dark delicious curl,  
 Flowing beneath her rose-hued zone;  
 The sweetest lady of the time,  
 Well worthy of the golden prime  
 Of good Haroun Alraschid.

Six columns, three on either side,  
 Pure silver, underpropt a rich  
 Throne of the massive ore, from which  
 Down-droop'd, in many a floating fold,  
 Engarlanded and diaper'd  
 With inwrought flowers, a cloth of gold.  
 Thereon, his deep eye laughter-stirr'd  
 With merriment of kingly pride,  
 Sole star of all that place and time,  
 I saw him — in his golden prime,  
 THE GOOD HAROUN ALRASCHID.

## ODE TO MEMORY.

ADDRESSED TO —.

## I.

THOU who stealest fire,  
 From the fountains of the past,  
 To glorify the present; oh, haste,  
 Visit my low desire!  
 Strengthen me, enlighten me!  
 I faint in this obscurity,  
 Thou dewy dawn of memory.

## II.

Come not as thou camest of late,  
 Flinging the gloom of yesternight  
 On the white day; but robed in soften'd  
 light  
 Of orient state.  
 Whilome thou camest with the morning  
 mist,  
 Even as a maid, whose stately brow  
 The dew-impearled winds of dawn have  
 kiss'd,  
 When she, as thou,  
 Stays on her floating locks the lovely  
 freight  
 Of overflowing blooms, and earliest shoots  
 Of orient green, giving safe pledge of fruits,  
 Which in wintertide shall star  
 The black earth with brilliance rare.

## III.

Whilome thou camest with the morning  
 mist,  
 And with the evening cloud,  
 Showering thy gleaned wealth into my  
 open breast  
 (Those peerless flowers which in the  
 rudest wind  
 Never grow sere,  
 When rooted in the garden of the mind,  
 Because they are the earliest of the  
 year).  
 Nor was the night thy shroud.  
 In sweet dreams softer than unbroken rest  
 Thou leddest by the hand thine infant  
 Hope.  
 The eddying of her garments caught from  
 thee  
 The light of thy great presence; and the  
 cope  
 Of the half-attain'd futurity,  
 Tho' deep not fathomless,  
 Was cloven with the million stars which  
 tremble  
 O'er the deep mind of dauntless infancy.  
 Small thought was there of life's distress;  
 For sure she deem'd no mist of earth  
 could dull  
 Those spirit-thrilling eyes so keen and  
 beautiful:  
 Sure she was nigher to heaven's spheres,  
 Listening the lordly music flowing from  
 The illimitable years.  
 O strengthen me, enlighten me!  
 I faint in this obscurity,  
 Thou dewy dawn of memory.

## IV.

Come forth, I charge thee, arise,  
 Thou of the many tongues, the myriad  
 eyes!  
 Thou comest not with shows of flaunting  
 vines  
 Unto mine inner eye,  
 Divinest Memory!  
 Thou wert not nursed by the waterfall  
 Which ever sounds and shines  
 A pillar of white light upon the wall  
 Of purple cliffs, aloof descried:  
 Come from the woods that belt the gray  
 hill-side,

The seven elms, the poplars four  
That stand beside my father's door,  
And chiefly from the brook that loves  
To purl o'er matted cress and ribbed sand,  
Or dimple in the dark of rushy coves,  
Drawing into his narrow earthen urn,

In every elbow and turn,  
The filter'd tribute of the rough woodland,  
O! hither lead thy feet!

Pour round mine ears the livelong bleat  
Of the thick-fleeced sheep from wattled  
folds,

Upon the ridged wolds,  
When the first matin-song hath waken'd  
loud

Over the dark dewy earth forlorn,  
What time the amber morn  
Forth gushes from beneath a low-hung  
cloud.

## v.

Large dowries doth the raptured eye

To the young spirit present

When first she is wed;

And like a bride of old

In triumph led,

With music and sweet showers

Of festal flowers,

Unto the dwelling she must sway.

Well hast thou done, great artist Memory,

In setting round thy first experiment

With royal frame-work of wrought  
gold;

Needs must thou dearly love thy first  
essay,

And foremost in thy various gallery

Place it, where sweetest sunlight falls

Upon the storied walls;

For the discovery

And newness of thine art so pleased thee,  
That all which thou hast drawn of fairest

Or boldest since, but lightly weighs

With thee unto the love thou bearest

The first-born of thy genius. Artist-like,  
Ever retiring thou dost gaze

On the prime labour of thine early days:

No matter what the sketch might be;

Whether the high field on the bushless  
Pike,

Or even a sand-built ridge

Of heaped hills that mound the sea,

Overblown with murmurs harsh,

Or even a lowly cottage whence we see

Stretch'd wide and wild the waste enor-  
mous marsh,

Where from the frequent bridge,

Like emblems of infinity,

The trenched waters run from sky to sky;

Or a garden bower'd close

With plaited alleys of the trailing rose,

Long alleys falling down to twilight grots.

Or opening upon level plots

Of crowned lilies, standing near

Purple-spiked lavender:

Whither in after life retired

From brawling storms,

From weary wind,

With youthful fancy re-inspired,

We may hold converse with all forms

Of the many-sided mind,

And those whom passion hath not blinded,

Subtle-thoughted, myriad-minded.

My friend, with you to live alone,

Were how much better than to own

A crown, a sceptre, and a throne!

O strengthen me, enlighten me!

I faint in this obscurity,

Thou dewy dawn of memory.

## SONG.

## I.

A SPIRIT haunts the year's last hours

Dwelling amid these yellowing bowers:

To himself he talks;

For at eventide, listening earnestly,

At his work you may hear him sob and  
sigh

In the walks;

Earthward he boweth the heavy  
stalks

Of the mouldering flowers:

Heavily hangs the broad sunflower

Over its grave i' the earth so  
chilly;

Heavily hangs the hollyhock,

Heavily hangs the tiger-lily.

## II.

The air is damp, and hush'd, and close,

As a sick man's room when he taketh  
repose



An hour before death ;  
 My very heart faints and my whole soul  
 grieves  
 At the moist rich smell of the rotting  
 leaves,  
 And the breath  
 Of the fading edges of box be-  
 neath,  
 And the year's last rose.  
 Heavily hangs the broad sunflower  
 Over its grave i' the earth so  
 chilly;  
 Heavily hangs the hollyhock,  
 Heavily hangs the tiger-lily.

## A CHARACTER.

WITH a half-glance upon the sky  
 At night he said, 'The wanderings  
 Of this most intricate Universe  
 Teach me the nothingness of things.'  
 Yet could not all creation pierce  
 Beyond the bottom of his eye.

He spake of beauty: that the dull  
 Saw no divinity in grass,  
 Life in dead stones, or spirit in air;  
 Then looking as 'twere in a glass,  
 He smooth'd his chin and sleek'd his  
 hair,  
 And said the earth was beautiful.

He spake of virtue: not the gods  
 More purely when they wish to charm  
 Pallas and Juno sitting by:  
 And with a sweeping of the arm,  
 And a lack-lustre dead-blue eye,  
 Devolved his rounded periods.

Most delicately hour by hour  
 He canvass'd human mysteries,  
 And trod on silk, as if the winds  
 Blew his own praises in his eyes,  
 And stood aloof from other minds  
 In impotence of fancied power.

With lips depress'd as he were meek,  
 Himself unto himself he sold:  
 Upon himself himself did feed:  
 Quiet, dispassionate, and cold,  
 And other than his form of creed,  
 With chisell'd features clear and sleek.

## THE POET.

THE poet in a golden clime was born,  
 With golden stars above;  
 Dower'd with the hate of hate, the  
 scorn of scorn,  
 The love of love.

He saw thro' life and death, thro' good  
 and ill,  
 He saw thro' his own soul.  
 The marvel of the everlasting will,  
 An open scroll,

Before him lay: with echoing feet he  
 threaded  
 The secretest walks of fame:  
 The viewless arrows of his thoughts  
 were headed  
 And wing'd with flame,

Like Indian reeds blown from his silver  
 tongue,  
 And of so fierce a flight,  
 From Calpe unto Caucasus they sung,  
 Filling with light

And vagrant melodies the winds which  
 bore  
 Them earthward till they lit;  
 Then, like the arrow-seeds of the field  
 flower,  
 The fruitful wit

Cleaving, took root, and springing forth  
 anew  
 Where'er they fell, behold,  
 Like to the mother plant in semblance,  
 grew  
 A flower all gold,

And bravely furnish'd all abroad to fling  
 The winged shafts of truth,  
 To throng with stately blooms the breath-  
 ing spring  
 Of Hope and Youth.

So many minds did gird their orbs with  
 beams,  
 Tho' one did fling the fire.  
 Heaven flow'd upon the soul in many  
 dreams  
 Of high desire.

Thus truth was multiplied on truth, the  
world

Like one great garden show'd,  
And thro' the wreaths of floating dark  
upcurl'd,  
Rare sunrise flow'd.

And Freedom rear'd in that august sun-  
rise

Her beautiful bold brow,  
When rites and forms before his burning  
eyes  
Melted like snow.

There was no blood upon her maiden  
robes

Sunn'd by those orient skies;  
But round about the circles of the  
globes  
Of her keen eyes

And in her raiment's hem was traced in  
flame

WISDOM, a name to shake  
All evil dreams of power—a sacred  
name.  
And when she spake,

Her words did gather thunder as they  
ran,

And as the lightning to the thunder  
Which follows it, riving the spirit of man,  
Making earth wonder,

So was their meaning to her words. No  
sword

Of wrath her right arm whirl'd,  
But one poor poet's scroll, and with *his*  
word  
She shook the world.

### THE POET'S MIND.

#### I.

VEX not thou the poet's mind  
With thy shallow wit:  
Vex not thou the poet's mind;  
For thou canst not fathom it.  
Clear and bright it should be ever,  
Flowing like a crystal river;  
Bright as light, and clear as wind.

#### II.

Dark-brow'd sophist, come not anear;  
All the place is holy ground;  
Hollow smile and frozen sneer  
Come not here.  
Holy water will I pour  
Into every spicy flower  
Of the laurel-shrubs that hedge it around.  
The flowers would faint at your cruel  
cheer.

In your eye there is death,  
There is frost in your breath  
Which would blight the plants.  
Where you stand you cannot hear  
From the groves within  
The wild-bird's din.

In the heart of the garden the merry bird  
chants.  
It would fall to the ground if you came  
in.

In the middle leaps a fountain  
Like sheet lightning,  
Ever brightening  
With a low melodious thunder;  
All day and all night it is ever drawn  
From the brain of the purple moun-  
tain

Which stands in the distance yonder:  
It springs on a level of bowery lawn,  
And the mountain draws it from Heaven  
above,  
And it sings a song of undying love;  
And yet, tho' its voice be so clear and  
full,

You never would hear it; your ears are  
so dull;  
So keep where you are: you are foul with  
sin;  
It would shrink to the earth if you came  
in.

### THE SEA-FAIRIES.

SLOW sail'd the weàry mariners and  
saw,  
Betwixt the green brink and the running  
foam,  
Sweet faces, rounded arms, and bosoms  
prest  
To little harps of gold; and while they  
mused

Whispering to each other half in fear,  
Shrill music reach'd them on the middle  
sea.

Whither away, whither away, whither  
away? fly no more.

Whither away from the high green field,  
and the happy blossoming shore?

Day and night to the billow the fountain  
calls :

Down shower the gambolling waterfalls  
From wandering over the lea :

Out of the live-green heart of the dells  
They freshen the silvery-crimson shells,  
And thick with white bells the clover-hill  
swells

High over the full-toned sea :  
O hither, come hither and furl your  
sails,

Come hither to me and to me :  
Hither, come hither and frolic and play;  
Here it is only the mew that wails;

We will sing to you all the day :  
Mariner, mariner, furl your sails,  
For here are the blissful downs and dales,  
And merrily, merrily carol the gales,

And the spangle dances in bight and  
bay,

And the rainbow forms and flies on the  
land

Over the islands free;  
And the rainbow lives in the curve of the  
sand;

Hither, come hither and see;  
And the rainbow hangs on the poisoning  
wave,

And sweet is the colour of cove and  
cave,

And sweet shall your welcome be :  
O hither, come hither, and be our lords,  
For merry brides are we :  
We will kiss sweet kisses, and speak  
sweet words :

O listen, listen, your eyes shall glisten  
With pleasure and love and jubilee :  
O listen, listen, your eyes shall glisten  
When the sharp clear twang of the golden  
chords

Runs up the ridged sea.  
Who can light on as happy a shore  
All the world o'er, all the world o'er?  
Whither away? listen and stay : mariner,  
mariner, fly no more.

## THE DESERTED HOUSE.

## I.

LIFE and Thought have gone away  
Side by side,  
Leaving door and windows wide :  
Careless tenants they !

## II.

All within is dark as night :  
In the windows is no light;  
And no murmur at the door,  
So frequent on its hinge before.

## III.

Close the door, the shutters close,  
Or thro' the windows we shall see  
The nakedness and vacancy  
Of the dark deserted house.

## IV.

Come away : no more of mirth  
Is here or merry-making sound.  
The house was builded of the earth,  
And shall fall again to ground.

## V.

Come away : for Life and Thought  
Here no longer dwell ;  
But in a city glorious —  
A great and distant city — have bought  
A mansion incorruptible.  
Would they could have stayed with us !

## THE DYING SWAN.

## I.

THE plain was grassy, wild and bare,  
Wide, wild, and open to the air,  
Which had built up everywhere  
An under-roof of doleful gray.  
With an inner voice the river ran,  
Adown it floated a dying swan,  
And loudly did lament.  
It was the middle of the day.  
Ever the weary wind went on,  
And took the reed-tops as it went.

## II.

Some blue peaks in the distance rose,  
And white against the cold-white sky,

Shone out their crowning snows.

One willow over the river wept,  
And shook the wave as the wind did sigh;  
Above in the wind was the swallow,  
Chasing itself at its own wild will,  
And far thro' the marish green and  
still

The tangled water-courses slept,  
Shot over with purple, and green, and  
yellow.

## III.

The wild swan's death-hymn took the soul  
Of that waste place with joy,  
Hidden in sorrow: at first to the ear  
The warble was low, and full and clear;  
And floating about the under-sky,  
Prevailing in weakness, the coronach  
stole

Sometimes afar, and sometimes anear  
But anon her awful jubilant voice,  
With a music strange and manifold,  
Flow'd forth on a carol free and bold  
As when a mighty people rejoice  
With shawms, and with cymbals, and  
harps of gold,

And the tumult of their acclaim is roll'd  
Thro' the open gates of the city afar,  
To the shepherd who watcheth the even-  
ing star.

And the creeping mosses and clambering  
weeds,

And the willow-branches hoar and dank,  
And the wavy swell of the souging  
reeds,

And the wave-worn horns of the echoing  
bank,

And the silvery marish-flowers that  
throng

The desolate creeks and pools among,  
Were flooded over with eddying song.

## A DIRGE.

## I.

Now is done thy long day's work;  
Fold thy palms across thy breast,  
Fold thine arms, turn to thy rest.

Let them rave.

Shadows of the silver birk  
Sweep the green that folds thy grave.

Let them rave.

## II.

Thee nor carketh care nor slander;  
Nothing but the small cold worm  
Fretteth thine enshrouded form.

Let them rave.

Light and shadow ever wander  
O'er the green that folds thy grave.

Let them rave.

## III.

Thou wilt not turn upon thy bed;  
Chaunteth not the brooding bee  
Sweeter tones than calumny?

Let them rave.

Thou wilt never raise thine head  
From the green that folds thy grave.

Let them rave.

## IV.

Crocodiles wept tears for thee;  
The woodbine and eglatere  
Drip sweeter dews than traitor's tear.

Let them rave.

Rain makes music in the tree  
O'er the green that folds thy grave.

Let them rave.

## V.

Round thee blow, self-pleached deep,  
Bramble roses, faint and pale,  
And long purples of the dale.

Let them rave.

These in every shower creep  
Thro' the green that folds thy grave.

Let them rave.

## VI.

The gold-eyed kingcups fine;  
The frail bluebell peereth over  
Rare broidry of the purple clover.

Let them rave.

Kings have no such couch as thine,  
As the green that folds thy grave.

Let them rave.

## VII.

Wild words wander here and there:  
God's great gift of speech abused  
Makes thy memory confused:

But let them rave.

The balm-cricket carols clear  
 In the green that folds thy grave.  
 Let them rave.

## LOVE AND DEATH.

WHAT time the mighty moon was gather-  
 ing light

Love paced the thymy plots of Paradise,  
 And all about him roll'd his lustrous eyes;  
 When, turning round a cassia, full in view,  
 Death, walking all alone beneath a yew,  
 And talking to himself, first met his  
 sight:

'You must begone,' said Death, 'these  
 walks are mine.'

Love wept and spread his sheeny vans  
 for flight;

Yet ere he parted said, 'This hour is  
 thine:

Thou art the shadow of life, and as the  
 tree

Stands in the sun and shadows all be-  
 neath,

So in the light of great eternity  
 Life eminent creates the shade of death;  
 The shadow passeth when the tree shall  
 fall,

But I shall reign for ever over all.'

## THE BALLAD OF ORIANA.

MY heart is wasted with my woe,  
 Oriana.

There is no rest for me below,  
 Oriana.

When the long dun wolds are ribb'd with  
 snow,

And loud the Norland whirlwinds blow,  
 Oriana,

Alone I wander to and fro,  
 Oriana.

Ere the light on dark was growing,  
 Oriana,

At midnight the cock was crowing,  
 Oriana:

Winds were blowing, waters flowing,  
 We heard the steeds to battle going,  
 Oriana;

Aloud the hollow bugle blowing,  
 Oriana.

In the yew-wood black as night,

Oriana,  
 Ere I rode into the fight,

Oriana,  
 While blissful tears blinded my sight  
 By star-shine and by moonlight,

Oriana,  
 I to thee my troth did plight,

Oriana.

She stood upon the castle wall,

Oriana:  
 She watch'd my crest among them all,

Oriana:  
 She saw me fight, she heard me call,  
 When forth there stept a foeman tall,

Oriana,  
 Atween me and the castle wall,

Oriana.

The bitter arrow went aside,

Oriana:  
 The false, false arrow went aside,

Oriana:  
 The damned arrow glanced aside,  
 And pierced thy heart, my love, my  
 bride,

Oriana!  
 Thy heart, my life, my love, my bride,  
 Oriana!

Oh! narrow, narrow was the space,  
 Oriana.

Loud, loud rung out the bugle's brays,  
 Oriana.

Oh! deathful stabs were dealt apace,  
 The battle deepen'd in its place,

Oriana;  
 But I was down upon my face,  
 Oriana.

They should have stabb'd me where I lay,  
 Oriana!

How could I rise and come away,  
 Oriana?

How could I look upon the day?  
 They should have stabb'd me where I lay,  
 Oriana—

They should have trod me into clay,  
 Oriana.

O breaking heart that will not break,  
 Oriana!

O pale, pale face so sweet and meek,  
     Oriana!  
 Thou smilest, but thou dost not speak,  
 And then the tears run down my cheek,  
     Oriana:  
 What watest thou? whom dost thou  
     seek,  
     Oriana?

I cry aloud: none hear my cries,  
     Oriana.  
 Thou comest atween me and the skies,  
     Oriana.  
 I feel the tears of blood arise  
 Up from my heart unto my eyes,  
     Oriana.  
 Within thy heart my arrow lies,  
     Oriana.

O cursed hand! O cursed blow!  
     Oriana!  
 O happy thou that liest low,  
     Oriana!  
 All night the silence seems to flow  
 Beside me in my utter woe,  
     Oriana.  
 A weary, weary way I go,  
     Oriana.

When Norland winds pipe down the sea,  
     Oriana,  
 I walk, I dare not think of thee,  
     Oriana.  
 Thou liest beneath the greenwood tree,  
 I dare not die and come to thee,  
     Oriana.  
 I hear the roaring of the sea,  
     Oriana.

### CIRCUMSTANCE.

Two children in two neighbour villages,  
 Playing mad pranks along the heathy leas;  
 Two strangers meeting at a festival;  
 Two lovers whispered by an orchard  
     wall;  
 Two lives bound fast in one with golden  
     ease;  
 Two graves grass-green beside a gray  
     church-tower,  
 Wash'd with still rains and daisy blos-  
     somed;

Two children in one hamlet born and  
     bred;  
 So runs the round of life from hour to  
     hour.

### THE MERMAN.

#### I.

WHO would be  
 A merman bold,  
 Sitting alone,  
 Singing alone  
 Under the sea,  
 With a crown of gold,  
 On a throne?

#### II.

I would be a merman bold,  
 I would sit and sing the whole of the  
     day;  
 I would fill the sea-halls with a voice of  
     power;  
 But at night I would roam abroad and  
     play  
 With the mermaids in and out of the  
     rocks,  
 Dressing their hair with the white sea-  
     flower;  
 And holding them back by their flowing  
     locks  
 I would kiss them often under the sea,  
 And kiss them again till they kiss'd me  
     Laughingly, laughingly;  
 And then we would wander away, away  
 To the pale-green sea-groves straight  
     and high,  
 Chasing each other merrily.

#### III.

There would be neither moon nor star;  
 But the wave would make music above  
     us afar —  
 Low thunder and light in the magic  
     night —  
     Neither moon nor star.  
 We would call aloud in the dreamy  
     dells,  
 Call to each other and whoop and cry  
     All night, merrily, merrily;  
 They would pelt me with starry spangles  
     and shells,



Laughing and clapping their hands between,

All night, merrily, merrily:  
But I would throw to them back in mine  
Turkis and agate and almondine:  
Then leaping out upon them unseen  
I would kiss them often under the sea,  
And kiss them again till they kiss'd me  
Laughingly, laughingly.

Oh! what a happy life were mine  
Under the hollow-hung ocean green!  
Soft are the moss-beds under the sea;  
We would live merrily, merrily.

## THE MERMAID.

## I.

WHO would be  
A mermaid fair,  
Singing alone,  
Combing her hair  
Under the sea,  
In a golden curl  
With a comb of pearl,  
On a throne?

## II.

I would be a mermaid fair;  
I would sing to myself the whole of the  
day;  
With a comb of pearl I would comb my  
hair;  
And still as I comb'd I would sing and  
say,  
'Who is it loves me? who loves not  
me?'  
I would comb my hair till my ringlets  
would fall  
Low adown, low adown,  
From under my starry sea-bud crown  
Low adown and around,  
And I should look like a fountain of  
gold  
Springing alone  
With a shrill inner sound,  
Over the throne  
In the midst of the hall;  
Till that great sea-snake under the sea  
From his coiled sleeps in the central  
deeps

Would slowly trail himself sevenfold  
Round the hall where I sate, and look in  
at the gate  
With his large calm eyes for the love of  
me.  
And all the mermen under the sea  
Would feel their immortality  
Die in their hearts for the love of me.

## III.

But at night I would wander away,  
away,  
I would fling on each side my low-  
flowing locks,  
And lightly vault from the throne and  
play  
With the mermen in and out of the  
rocks;  
We would run to and fro, and hide and  
seek,  
On the broad sea-wolds in the crimson  
shells,  
Whose silvery spikes are nighest the  
sea.  
But if any came near I would call, and  
shriek,  
And adown the steep like a wave I  
would leap  
From the diamond-ledges that jut from  
the dells;  
For I would not be kiss'd by all who  
would list,  
Of the bold merry mermen under the  
sea;  
They would sue me, and woo me, and  
flatter me,  
In the purple twilights under the sea;  
But the king of them all would carry  
me,  
Woo me, and win me, and marry me,  
In the branching jaspers under the  
sea;  
Then all the dry pied things that be  
In the hueless mosses under the sea  
Would curl round my silver feet silently,  
All looking up for the love of me.  
And if I should carol aloud, from aloft  
All things that are forked, and horned,  
and soft  
Would lean out from the hollow sphere  
of the sea,  
All looking down for the love of me.

## ADELINE.

## I.

MYSTERY of mysteries,  
Faintly smiling Adeline,  
Scarce of earth nor all divine,  
Nor unhappy, nor at rest,  
But beyond expression fair  
With thy floating flaxen hair;  
Thy rose-lips and full blue eyes  
Take the heart from out my breast.  
Wherefore those dim looks of thine,  
Shadowy, dreaming Adeline ?

## II.

Whence that aery bloom of thine,  
Like a lily which the sun  
Looks thro' in his sad decline,  
And a rose-bush leans upon,  
Thou that faintly smilest still,  
As a Naiad in a well,  
Looking at the set of day,  
Or a phantom two hours old  
Of a maiden past away,  
Ere the placid lips be cold?  
Wherefore those faint smiles of thine,  
Spiritual Adeline ?

## III.

What hope or fear or joy is thine?  
Who talketh with thee, Adeline?  
For sure thou art not all alone.  
Do beating hearts of salient springs  
Keep measure with thine own?  
Hast thou heard the butterflies  
What they say betwixt their wings?  
Or in stillest evenings  
With what voice the violet woos  
To his heart the silver dews?  
Or when little airs arise,  
How the merry bluebell rings  
To the mosses underneath?  
Hast thou look'd upon the breath  
Of the lilies at sunrise?  
Wherefore that faint smile of thine,  
Shadowy, dreaming Adeline ?

## IV.

Some honey-converse feeds thy mind,  
Some spirit of a crimson rose

In love with thee forgets to close  
His curtains, wasting odorous sighs  
All night long on darkness blind.  
What aileth thee? whom waitest thou  
With thy soften'd, shadow'd brow,  
And those dew-lit eyes of thine,  
Thou faint smiler, Adeline ?

## V.

Lovest thou the doleful wind  
When thou gazest at the skies?  
Doth the low-tongued Orient  
Wander from the side of the morn,  
Dripping with Sabæan spice  
On thy pillow, lowly bent  
With melodious airs lovelorn,  
Breathing Light against thy face,  
While his locks a-drooping twined  
Round thy neck in subtle ring  
Make a carcanet of rays,  
And ye talk together still,  
In the language wherewith Spring  
Letters cowslips on the hill?  
Hence that look and smile of thine,  
Spiritual Adeline.

## MARGARET.

## I.

O SWEET pale Margaret,  
O rare pale Margaret,  
What lit your eyes with tearful power,  
Like moonlight on a falling shower?  
Who lent you, love, your mortal dower  
Of pensive thought and aspect pale,  
Your melancholy sweet and frail  
As perfume of the cuckoo-flower?  
From the westward-winding flood,  
From the evening-lighted wood,  
From all things outward you have  
won  
A tearful grace, as tho' you stood  
Between the rainbow and the sun.  
The very smile before you speak,  
That dimples your transparent cheek,  
Encircles all the heart, and feedeth  
The senses with a still delight  
Of dainty sorrow without sound,  
Like the tender amber round,  
Which the moon about her spreadeth,  
Moving thro' a fleecy night.

## II.

You love, remaining peacefully,  
 To hear the murmur of the strife,  
 But enter not the toil of life.  
 Your spirit is the calmed sea,  
 Laid by the tumult of the fight.  
 You are the evening star, always  
 Remaining betwixt dark and bright :  
 Lull'd echoes of laborious day  
 Come to you, gleams of mellow light  
 Float by you on the verge of night.

## III.

What can it matter, Margaret,  
 What songs below the waning stars  
 The lion-heart, Plantagenet,  
 Sang looking thro' his prison bars?  
 Exquisite Margaret, who can tell  
 The last wild thought of Chatelet,  
 Just ere the falling axe did part  
 The burning brain from the true heart,  
 Even in her sight he loved so well?

## IV.

A fairy shield your Genius made  
 And gave you on your natal day.  
 Your sorrow, only sorrow's shade,  
 Keeps real sorrow far away.  
 You move not in such solitudes,  
 You are not less divine,  
 But more human in your moods,  
 Than your twin-sister, Adeline.  
 Your hair is darker, and your eyes  
 Touch'd with a somewhat darker hue,  
 And less ærially blue,  
 But ever trembling thro' the dew  
 Of dainty-woeful sympathies.

## V.

O sweet pale Margaret,  
 O rare pale Margaret,  
 Come down, come down, and hear me  
 speak :  
 Tie up the ringlets on your cheek :  
 The sun is just about to set,  
 The arching limes are tall and shady,  
 And faint rainy lights are seen,  
 Moving in the leavy beech.  
 Rise from the feast of sorrow, lady,  
 Where all day long you sit between  
 Joy and woe, and whisper each.

Or only look across the lawn,  
 Look out below your bower-eaves,  
 Look down, and let your blue eyes dawn  
 Upon me thro' the jasmine-leaves.

## ROSALIND.

## I.

My Rosalind, my Rosalind,  
 My frolic falcon, with bright eyes,  
 Whose free delight, from any height of  
 rapid flight,  
 Stoops at all game that wing the skies,  
 My Rosalind, my Rosalind,  
 My bright-eyed, wild-eyed falcon, whither,  
 Careless both of wind and weather,  
 Whither fly ye, what game spy ye,  
 Up or down the streaming wind?

## II.

The quick lark's closest-caroll'd strains,  
 The shadow rushing up the sea,  
 The lightning flash atween the rains,  
 The sunlight driving down the lea,  
 The leaping stream, the very wind,  
 That will not stay, upon his way,  
 To stoop the cowslip to the plains,  
 Is not so clear and bold and free  
 As you, my falcon Rosalind.  
 You care not for another's pains,  
 Because you are the soul of joy,  
 Bright metal all without alloy.  
 Life shoots and glances thro' your veins,  
 And flashes off a thousand ways,  
 Thro' lips and eyes in subtle rays.  
 Your hawk-eyes are keen and bright,  
 Keen with triumph, watching still  
 To pierce me thro' with pointed light ;  
 But oftentimes they flash and glitter  
 Like sunshine on a dancing rill,  
 And your words are seeming-bitter,  
 Sharp and few, but seeming-bitter  
 From excess of swift delight.

## III.

Come down, come home, my Rosalind,  
 My gay young hawk, my Rosalind :  
 Too long you keep the upper skies ;  
 Too long you roam and wheel at will ;  
 But we must hood your random eyes,  
 That care not whom they kill,

And your cheek, whose brilliant hue  
Is so sparkling-fresh to view,  
Some red heath-flower in the dew,  
Touch'd with sunrise. We must bind  
And keep you fast, my Rosalind,  
Fast, fast, my wild-eyed Rosalind,  
And clip your wings, and make you love:  
When we have lured you from above,  
And that delight of frolic flight, by day  
or night,  
From North to South,  
We'll bind you fast in silken cords,  
And kiss away the bitter words  
From off your rosy mouth.

## ELEÄNORE.

## I.

THY dark eyes open'd not,  
Nor first reveal'd themselves to English  
air,  
For there is nothing here,  
Which, from the outward to the inward  
brought,  
Moulded thy baby thought.  
Far off from human neighbourhood,  
Thou wert born on a summer morn,  
A mile beneath the cedar-wood.  
Thy bounteous forehead was not fann'd  
With breezes from our oaken glades,  
But thou wert nursed in some delicious  
land  
Of lavish lights, and floating shades:  
And flattering thy childish thought  
The oriental fairy brought,  
At the moment of thy birth,  
From old well-heads of haunted rills,  
And the hearts of purple hills,  
And shadow'd coves on a sunny shore,  
The choicest wealth of all the  
earth,  
Jewel or shell, or starry ore,  
To deck thy cradle, Eleänore.

## II.

Or the yellow-banded bees,  
Thro' half-open lattices  
Coming in the scented breeze,  
Fed thee, a child, lying alone,  
With whitest honey in fairy gar-  
dens cull'd —

A glorious child, dreaming alone,  
In silk-soft folds, upon yielding down,  
With the hum of swarming bees  
Into dreamful slumber lull'd.

## III.

Who may minister to thee;  
Summer herself should minister  
To thee, with fruitage golden-rinded  
On golden salvers, or it may be,  
Youngest Autumn, in a bower  
Grape-thicken'd from the light, and  
blinded  
With many a deep-hued bell-like  
flower  
Of fragrant trailers, when the air  
Sleepeth over all the heaven,  
And the crag that fronts the Even,  
All along the shadowing shore,  
Crimsons over an inland mere,  
Eleänore!

## IV.

How may full-sail'd verse express,  
How may measured words adore  
The full-flowing harmony  
Of thy swan-like stateliness,  
Eleänore?  
The luxuriant symmetry  
Of thy floating gracefulness,  
Eleänore?  
Every turn and glance of thine,  
Every lineament divine,  
Eleänore,  
And the steady sunset glow,  
That stays upon thee? For in thee  
Is nothing sudden, nothing single;  
Like two streams of incense free  
From one censer in one shrine,  
Thought and motion mingle,  
Mingle ever. Motions flow  
To one another, even as tho'  
They were modulated so  
To an unheard melody,  
Which lives about thee, and a sweep  
Of richest pauses, evermore  
Drawn from each other mellow-deep;  
Who may express thee, Eleänore?

## V.

I stand before thee, Eleänore;  
I see thy beauty gradually unfold,

Daily and hourly, more and more.  
 I muse, as in a trance, the while  
     Slowly, as from a cloud of gold,  
 Comes out thy deep ambrosial smile.  
 I muse, as in a trance, whene'er  
     The languors of thy love-deep eyes  
 Float on to me. I would I were  
     So tranced, so rapt in ecstasies,  
 To stand apart, and to adore,  
 Gazing on thee for evermore,  
 Serene, imperial Eleänore!

## vi.

Sometimes, with most intensity  
 Gazing, I seem to see  
 Thought folded over thought, smiling  
     asleep,  
 Slowly awaken'd, grow so full and deep  
 In thy large eyes, that, overpower'd quite,  
 I cannot veil, or droop my sight,  
 But am as nothing in its light:  
 As tho' a star, in inmost heaven set,  
 Ev'n while we gaze on it,  
 Should slowly round his orb, and slowly  
     grow  
 To a full face, there like a sun remain  
 Fix'd — then as slowly fade again,  
     And draw itself to what it was  
     before;  
     So full, so deep, so slow,  
     Thought seems to come and go  
 In thy large eyes, imperial Eleänore.

## vii.

As thunder-clouds that, hung on high,  
     Roof'd the world with doubt and  
     fear,  
 Floating thro' an evening atmosphere,  
 Grow golden all about the sky;  
 In thee all passion becomes passionless,  
 Touch'd by thy spirit's mellowness,  
 Losing his fire and active might  
     In a silent meditation,  
 Falling into a still delight,  
     And luxury of contemplation  
 As waves that up a quiet cove  
     Rolling slide, and lying still  
     Shadow forth the banks at will:  
 Or sometimes they swell and move,  
     Pressing up against the land,  
     With motions of the outer sea:

And the self-same influence  
 Controlleth all the soul and sense  
 Of Passion gazing upon thee.  
 His bow-string slacken'd, languid Love,  
 Leaning his cheek upon his hand,  
 Droops both his wings, regarding thee,  
 And so both languish evermore,  
 Serene, imperial Eleänore.

## VIII.

But when I see thee roam, with tresses  
     unconfined,  
 While the amorous, odorous wind  
     Breathes low between the sunset and  
     the moon;  
     Or, in a shadowy saloon,  
 On silken cushions half reclined;  
     I watch thy grace; and in its place  
 My heart a charmed slumber keeps,  
     While I muse upon thy face;  
     And a languid fire creeps  
     Thro' my veins to all my frame,  
 Dissolvingly and slowly: soon  
     From thy rose-red lips MY name  
 Floweth; and then, as in a swoon,  
     With dinning sound my ears are  
     rife,  
     My tremulous tongue faltereth,  
     I lose my colour, I lose my breath,  
     I drink the cup of a costly death,  
 Brimmed with delirious draughts of warm-  
     est life.  
     I die with my delight, before  
     I hear what I would hear from  
     thee;  
     Yet tell my name again to me,  
 I *would* be dying evermore,  
 So dying ever, Eleänore.

## I.

My life is full of weary days,  
 But good things have not kept aloof,  
 Nor wander'd into other ways:  
 I have not lack'd thy mild reproof,  
 Nor golden largess of thy praise.  
 And now shake hands across the brink  
 Of that deep grave to which I go:  
 Shake hands once more: I cannot sink  
 So far — far down, but I shall know  
 Thy voice, and answer from below.

## II.

When in the darkness over me  
 The four-handed mole shall scrape,  
 Plant thou no dusky cypress-tree,  
 Nor wreath thy cap with doleful crape,  
 But pledge me in the flowing grape.

And when the sappy field and wood  
 Grow green beneath the showery gray,  
 And rugged barks begin to bud,  
 And thro' damp holts new-flush'd with  
 May,  
 Ring sudden scritchings of the jay,

Then let wise Nature work her will,  
 And on my clay her darnel grow;  
 Come only, when the days are still,  
 And at my headstone whisper low,  
 And tell me if the woodbines blow.

## EARLY SONNETS.

## I.

TO —.

As when with downcast eyes we muse and  
 brood,  
 And ebb into a former life, or seem  
 To lapse far back in some confused dream  
 To states of mystical similitude;  
 If one but speaks or hems or stirs his chair,  
 Ever the wonder waxeth more and more,  
 So that we say, 'All this hath been before,  
 All this hath been, I know not when or  
 where.'

So, friend, when first I look'd upon your  
 face,  
 Our thought gave answer each to each, so  
 true —

Opposed mirrors each reflecting each —  
 That tho' I knew not in what time or place,  
 Methought that I had often met with you,  
 And either lived in either's heart and  
 speech.

## II.

TO J. M. K.

My hope and heart is with thee — thou  
 wilt be  
 A latter Luther, and a soldier-priest

To scare church-harpies from the master's  
 feast;

Our dusted velvets have much need of  
 thee:

Thou art no Sabbath-drawler of old saws,  
 Distill'd from some worm-canker'd  
 homily;

But spurr'd at heart with fieriest energy  
 To embattail and to wall about thy cause  
 With iron-worded proof, hating to hark  
 The humming of the drowsy pulpit-drone  
 Half God's good sabbath, while the worn-  
 out clerk

Brow-beats his desk below. Thou from  
 a throne

Mounted in heaven wilt shoot into the  
 dark

Arrows of lightnings. I will stand and  
 mark.

## III.

MINE be the strength of spirit, full and  
 free,

Like some broad river rushing down  
 alone,

With the selfsame impulse wherewith he  
 was thrown

From his loud fount upon the echoing  
 lea: —

Which with increasing might doth for-  
 ward flee

By town, and tower, and hill, and cape,  
 and isle,

And in the middle of the green salt sea  
 Keeps his blue waters fresh for many a  
 mile.

Mine be the power which ever to its sway  
 Will win the wise at once, and by degrees  
 May into uncongenial spirits flow;  
 Ev'n as the warm gulf-stream of Florida  
 Floats far away into the Northern seas  
 The lavish growths of southern Mexico.

## IV.

ALEXANDER.

WARRIOR of God, whose strong right  
 arm debased

The throne of Persia, when her Satrap  
 bled

At Issus by the Syrian gates, or fled  
 Beyond the Memmian naphtha-pits, dis-  
 graced



For ever—thee (thy pathway sand-  
erased)

Gliding with equal crowns two serpents led  
Joyful to that palm-planted fountain-fed  
Ammonian Oasis in the waste.

There in a silent shade of laurel brown  
Apart the Chamian Oracle divine  
Shelter'd his unapproached mysteries:  
High things were spoken there, unhand-  
ed down;

Only they saw thee from the secret shrine  
Returning with hot cheek and kindled  
eyes.

## V.

## BUONAPARTE.

HE thought to quell the stubborn hearts  
of oak,

Madman!—to chain with chains, and  
bind with bands

That island queen who sways the floods  
and lands

From Ind to Ind, but in fair daylight woke,  
When from her wooden walls,—lit by  
sure hands,—

With thunders, and with lightnings, and  
with smoke,—

Peal after peal, the British battle broke,  
Lulling the brine against the Coptic sands.  
We taught him lowlier moods, when El-  
sinore

Heard the war moan along the distant sea,  
Rocking with shatter'd spars, with sud-  
den fires

Flamed over: at Trafalgar yet once more  
We taught him: late he learned humility  
Perforce, like those whom Gideon school'd  
with briers.

## VI.

## POLAND.

How long, O God, shall men be ridden  
down,

And trampled under by the last and least  
Of men? The heart of Poland hath not  
ceased

To quiver, tho' her sacred blood doth  
drown

The fields, and out of every smouldering  
town

Cries to Thee, lest brute Power be in-  
creased,

Till that o'ergrown Barbarian in the East  
Transgress his ample bound to some new  
crown:—

Cries to Thee, 'Lord, how long shall  
these things be?

How long this icy-hearted Muscovite  
Oppress the region?' Us, O Just and  
Good,

Forgive, who smiled when she was torn  
in three;

Us, who stand now, when we should aid  
the right—

A matter to be wept with tears of blood!

## VII.

CARESS'D or chidden by the slender hand,  
And singing airy trifles this or that,  
Light Hope at Beauty's call would perch  
and stand,

And run thro' every change of sharp and  
flat;

And Fancy came and at her pillow sat,  
When Sleep had bound her in his rosy  
band,

And chased away the still-recurring gnat,  
And woke her with a lay from fairy land.  
But now they live with Beauty less and  
less,

For Hope is other Hope and wanders far,  
Nor cares to lisp in love's delicious creeds;  
And Fancy watches in the wilderness,  
Poor Fancy sadder than a single star,  
That sets at twilight in a land of reeds.

## VIII.

THE form, the form alone is eloquent!  
A nobler yearning never broke her rest  
Than but to dance and sing, be gaily  
drest,

And win all eyes with all accomplish-  
ment:

Yet in the whirling dances as we went,  
My fancy made me for a moment blest  
To find my heart so near the beauteous  
breast

That once had power to rob it of content.  
A moment came the tenderness of tears,  
The phantom of a wish that once could  
move,

A ghost of passion that no smiles re-  
store—

For ah! the slight coquette, she cannot  
love,

And if you kiss'd her feet a thousand  
years,  
She still would take the praise, and care  
no more.

## IX.

WAN Sculptor, weepest thou to take the  
cast  
Of those dead lineaments that near thee  
lie?  
O sorrowest thou, pale Painter, for the  
past,  
In painting some dead friend from  
memory?  
Weep on: beyond his object Love can  
last:  
His object lives: more cause to weep  
have I:  
My tears, no tears of love, are flowing fast,  
No tears of love, but tears that Love can  
die.  
I pledge her not in any cheerful cup,  
Nor care to sit beside her where she sits—  
Ah pity—hint it not in human tones,  
But breathe it into earth and close it up  
With secret death for ever, in the pits  
Which some green Christmas crams with  
weary bones.

## X.

IF I were loved, as I desire to be,  
What is there in the great sphere of the  
earth,  
And range of evil between death and birth,  
That I should fear,—if I were loved by  
thee?  
All the inner, all the outer world of pain  
Clear Love would pierce and cleave, if  
thou wert mine,  
As I have heard that, somewhere in the  
main,

Fresh-water springs come up through  
bitter brine.

'Twere joy, not fear, claspt hand-in-hand  
with thee,

To wait for death—mute—careless of  
all ills,

Apart upon a mountain, tho' the surge  
Of some new deluge from a thousand hills  
Flung leagues of roaring foam into the  
gorge

Below us, as far on as eye could see.

## XI.

## THE BRIDESMAID.

O BRIDESMAID, ere the happy knot was  
tied,

Thine eyes so wept that they could hardly  
see;

Thy sister smiled and said, 'No tears for  
me!

A happy bridesmaid makes a happy  
bride.'

And then, the couple standing side by  
side,

Love lighted down between them full of  
glee,

And over his left shoulder laugh'd at  
thee,

'O happy bridesmaid, make a happy  
bride.'

And all at once a pleasant truth I learn'd,  
For while the tender service made thee  
weep,

I loved thee for the tear thou couldst not  
hide,

And prest thy hand, and knew the press  
return'd,

And thought, 'My life is sick of single  
sleep:

O happy bridesmaid, make a happy  
bride!'

## THE LADY OF SHALOTT

## AND OTHER POEMS.

## THE LADY OF SHALOTT.

## PART I.

ON either side the river lie  
 Long fields of barley and of rye,  
 That clothe the wold and meet the sky;  
 And thro' the field the road runs by  
     To many-tower'd Camelot;  
 And up and down the people go,  
 Gazing where the lilies blow  
 Round an island there below,  
     The island of Shalott.

Willows whiten, aspens quiver,  
 Little breezes dusk and shiver  
 Thro' the wave that runs for ever  
 By the island in the river  
     Flowing down to Camelot.  
 Four gray walls, and four gray towers,  
 Overlook a space of flowers,  
 And the silent isle imbowers  
     The Lady of Shalott.

By the margin, willow-veil'd  
 Slide the heavy barges trail'd  
 By slow horses; and unhail'd  
 The shallop flitteth silken-sail'd  
     Skimming down to Camelot:  
 But who hath seen her wave her hand?  
 Or at the casement seen her stand?  
 Or is she known in all the land,  
     The Lady of Shalott?

Only reapers, reaping early  
 In among the bearded barley,  
 Hear a song that echoes cheerly  
 From the river winding clearly,  
     Down to tower'd Camelot:  
 And by the moon the reaper weary,  
 Piling sheaves in uplands airy,  
 Listening, whispers 'Tis the fairy  
     Lady of Shalott.'

## PART II.

THERE she weaves by night and day  
 A magic web with colours gay.  
 She has heard a whisper say,  
 A curse is on her if she stay  
     To look down to Camelot.  
 She knows not what the curse may be,  
 And so she weaveth steadily,  
 And little other care hath she,  
     The Lady of Shalott.

And moving thro' a mirror clear  
 That hangs before her all the year,  
 Shadows of the world appear.  
 There she sees the highway near  
     Winding down to Camelot:  
 There the river eddy whirls,  
 And there the surly village-churls,  
 And the red cloaks of market girls,  
     Pass onward from Shalott.

Sometimes a troop of damsels glad,  
 An abbot on an ambling pad,  
 Sometimes a curly shepherd-lad,  
 Or long-hair'd page in crimson clad,  
     Goes by to tower'd Camelot:  
 And sometimes thro' the mirror blue  
 The knights come riding two and two:  
 She hath no loyal knight and true,  
     The Lady of Shalott.

But in her web she still delights  
 To weave the mirror's magic sights,  
 For often thro' the silent nights  
 A funeral, with plumes and lights  
     And music, went to Camelot:  
 Or when the moon was overhead,  
 Came two young lovers lately wed;  
 'I am half sick of shadows,' said  
     The Lady of Shalott.

## PART III.

A BOW-SHOT from her bower-eaves,  
 He rode between the barley-sheaves,  
 The sun came dazzling thro' the leaves,  
 And flamed upon the brazen greaves  
 Of bold Sir Lancelot.

A red-cross knight for ever kneel'd  
 To a lady in his shield,  
 That sparkled on the yellow field,  
 Beside remote Shalott.

The gemmy bridle glitter'd free,  
 Like to some branch of stars we see  
 Hung in the golden Galaxy.  
 The bridle bells rang merrily  
 As he rode down to Camelot :  
 And from his blazon'd baldric slung  
 A mighty silver bugle hung,  
 And as he rode his armour rung,  
 Beside remote Shalott.

All in the blue unclouded weather  
 Thick-jewell'd shone the saddle-leather,  
 The helmet and the helmet-feather  
 Burn'd like one burning flame together,  
 As he rode down to Camelot.  
 As often thro' the purple night,  
 Below the starry clusters bright,  
 Some bearded meteor, trailing light,  
 Moves over still Shalott.

His broad clear brow in sunlight glow'd;  
 On burnish'd hooves his war-horse trode;  
 From underneath his helmet flow'd  
 His coal-black curls as on he rode,  
 As he rode down to Camelot.  
 From the bank and from the river  
 He flash'd into the crystal mirror,  
 'Tirra lirra,' by the river  
 Sang Sir Lancelot.

She left the web, she left the loom,  
 She made three paces thro' the room,  
 She saw the water-lily bloom,  
 She saw the helmet and the plume,  
 She look'd down to Camelot.  
 Out flew the web and floated wide;  
 The mirror crack'd from side to side;  
 'The curse is come upon me,' cried  
 The Lady of Shalott.

## PART IV.

IN the stormy east-wind straining,  
 The pale yellow woods were waning,  
 The broad stream in his banks complain-  
 ing,  
 Heavily the low sky raining  
 Over tower'd Camelot;  
 Down she came and found a boat  
 Beneath a willow left afloat,  
 And round about the prow she wrote  
*The Lady of Shalott.*

And down the river's dim expanse  
 Like some bold seër in a trance,  
 Seeing all his own mischance —  
 With a glassy countenance  
 Did she look to Camelot.  
 And at the closing of the day  
 She loosed the chain, and down she lay;  
 The broad stream bore her far away,  
 The Lady of Shalott.

Lying, robed in snowy white  
 That loosely flew to left and right —  
 The leaves upon her falling light —  
 Thro' the noises of the night  
 She floated down to Camelot :  
 And as the boat-head wound along  
 The willowy hills and fields among,  
 They heard her singing her last song,  
 The Lady of Shalott.

Heard a carol, mournful, holy,  
 Chanted loudly, chanted lowly,  
 Till her blood was frozen slowly,  
 And her eyes were darken'd wholly,  
 Turn'd to tower'd Camelot.  
 For ere she reach'd upon the tide  
 The first house by the water-side,  
 Singing in her song she died,  
 The Lady of Shalott.

Under tower and balcony,  
 By garden-wall and gallery,  
 A gleaming shape she floated by,  
 Dead-pale between the houses high,  
 Silent into Camelot.  
 Out upon the wharfs they came,  
 Knight and burgher, lord and dame,  
 And round the prow they read her name,  
*The Lady of Shalott.*

Who is this? and what is here?  
 And in the lighted palace near  
 Died the sound of royal cheer;  
 And they cross'd themselves for fear,  
     All the knights at Camelot:  
 But Lancelot mused a little space;  
 He said, 'She has a lovely face;  
 God in his mercy lend her grace,  
     The Lady of Shalott.'

MARIANA IN THE SOUTH.

WITH one black shadow at its feet,  
 The house thro' all the level shines,  
 Close-latticed to the brooding heat,  
 And silent in its dusty vines:  
 A faint-blue ridge upon the right,  
 An empty river-bed before,  
 And shallows on a distant shore,  
 In glaring sand and inlets bright.  
     But 'Ave Mary,' made she moan,  
     And 'Ave Mary,' night and morn,  
 And 'Ah,' she sang, 'to be all alone,  
     To live forgotten, and love forlorn.'

She, as her carol sadder grew,  
 From brow and bosom slowly down  
 Thro' rosy taper fingers drew  
 Her streaming curls of deepest brown  
 To left and right, and made appear  
 Still-lighted in a secret shrine,  
 Her melancholy eyes divine,  
 The home of woe without a tear.  
     And 'Ave Mary,' was her moan,  
     'Madonna, sad is night and morn,'  
 And 'Ah,' she sang, 'to be all alone,  
     To live forgotten, and love forlorn.'

Till all the crimson changed, and past  
 Into deep orange o'er the sea,  
 Low on her knees herself she cast,  
 Before Our Lady murmur'd she;  
 Complaining, 'Mother, give me grace  
     To help me of my weary load.'  
 And on the liquid mirror glow'd  
 The clear perfection of her face.  
     'Is this the form,' she made her  
     moan,  
     'That won his praises night and  
     morn?'  
 And 'Ah,' she said, 'but I wake  
     alone,  
     I sleep forgotten, I wake forlorn.'

Nor bird would sing, nor lamb would  
 bleat,  
     Nor any cloud would cross the vault,  
 But day increased from heat to heat,  
     On stony drought and steaming salt;  
 Till now at noon she slept again,  
     And seem'd knee-deep in mountain  
     grass,  
 And heard her native breezes pass,  
 And runlets babbling down the glen.  
     She breathed in sleep a lower moan,  
     And murmuring, as at night and  
     morn,  
 She thought, 'My spirit is here alone,  
     Walks forgotten, and is forlorn.'

Dreaming, she knew it was a dream:  
 She felt he was and was not there.  
 She woke: the babble of the stream  
 Fell, and, without, the steady glare  
 Shrank one sick willow sere and small.  
     The river-bed was dusty-white;  
     And all the furnace of the light  
 Struck up against the blinding wall.  
     She whisper'd, with a stifed moan  
     More inward than at night or morn,  
     'Sweet Mother, let me not here alone  
     Live forgotten and die forlorn.'

And, rising, from her bosom drew  
 Old letters, breathing of her worth,  
 For 'Love,' they said, 'must needs be  
     true,  
     To what is loveliest upon earth.'  
 An image seem'd to pass the door,  
 To look at her with slight, and say  
     'But now thy beauty flows away,  
 So be alone for evermore.'  
     'O cruel heart,' she changed her tone,  
     'And cruel love, whose end is scorn,  
 Is this the end to be left alone,  
     To live forgotten, and die forlorn?'

But sometimes in the falling day  
 An image seem'd to pass the door,  
 To look into her eyes and say,  
     'But thou shalt be alone no more.'  
 And flaming downward over all  
     From heat to heat the day decreased,  
     And slowly rounded to the east  
 The one black shadow from the wall.  
     'The day to night,' she made her  
     moan.

'The day to night, the night to  
morn,  
And day and night I am left alone  
To live forgotten, and love forlorn.'

At eve a dry cicala sung,  
There came a sound as of the sea;  
Backward the lattice-blind she flung,  
And lean'd upon the balcony.  
There all in spaces rosy-bright  
Large Hesper glitter'd on her tears,  
And deepening thro' the silent spheres  
Heaven over Heaven rose the night.  
And weeping then she made her moan,  
'The night comes on that knows not  
morn,  
When I shall cease to be all alone,  
To live forgotten, and love forlorn.'

### THE TWO VOICES.

A STILL small voice spake unto me,  
'Thou art so full of misery,  
Were it not better not to be?'

Then to the still small voice I said:  
'Let me not cast in endless shade  
What is so wonderfully made.'

To which the voice did urge reply:  
'To-day I saw the dragon-fly  
Come from the wells where he did lie.

'An inner impulse rent the veil  
Of his old husk: from head to tail  
Came out clear plates of sapphire mail.

'He dried his wings: like gauze they  
grew;  
Thro' crofts and pastures wet with dew  
A living flash of light he flew.'

I said, 'When first the world began,  
Young Nature thro' five cycles ran,  
And in the sixth she moulded man.

'She gave him mind, the lordliest  
Proportion, and, above the rest,  
Dominion in the head and breast.'

Thereto the silent voice replied:  
'Self-blinded are you by your pride:  
Look up thro' night: the world is wide.

'This truth within thy mind rehearse,  
That in a boundless universe  
Is boundless better, boundless worse.

'Think you this mould of hopes and fears  
Could find no statelier than his peers  
In yonder hundred million spheres?'

It spake, moreover, in my mind:  
'Tho' thou wert scatter'd to the wind,  
Yet is there plenty of the kind.'

Then did my response clearer fall:  
'No compound of this earthly ball  
Is like another, all in all.'

To which he answer'd scoffingly:  
'Good soul! suppose I grant it thee,  
Who'll weep for thy deficiency?'

'Or will one beam be less intense,  
When thy peculiar difference  
Is cancell'd in the world of sense?'

I would have said, 'Thou canst not  
know,'  
But my full heart, that work'd below,  
Rain'd thro' my sight its overflow.

Again the voice spake unto me:  
'Thou art so steep'd in misery,  
Surely 'twere better not to be.

'Thine anguish will not let thee sleep,  
Nor any train of reason keep:  
Thou canst not think, but thou wilt  
weep.'

I said, 'The years with change advance:  
If I make dark my countenance,  
I shut my life from happier chance.

'Some turn this sickness yet might take,  
Ev'n yet.' But he: 'What drug can  
make  
A wither'd palsy cease to shake?'

I wept, 'Tho' I should die, I know  
That all about the thorn will blow  
In tufts of rosy-tinted snow;



'And men, thro' novel spheres of thought  
Still moving after truth long sought,  
Will learn new things when I am not.'

'Yet,' said the secret voice, 'some time,  
Sooner or later, will gray prime  
Make thy grass hoar with early rime.

'Not less swift souls that yearn for light,  
Rapt after heaven's starry flight,  
Would sweep the tracts of day and night.

'Not less the bee would range her cells,  
The furzy prickle fire the dells,  
The foxglove cluster dappled bells.'

I said that 'all the years invent;  
Each month is various to present  
The world with some development.

'Were this not well, to bide mine hour,  
Tho' watching from a ruin'd tower  
How grows the day of human power?'

'The highest-mounted mind,' he said,  
'Still sees the sacred morning spread  
The silent summit overhead.

'Will thirty seasons render plain  
Those lonely lights that still remain,  
Just breaking over land and main?'

'Or make that morn, from his cold  
crown  
And crystal silence creeping down,  
Flood with full daylight glebe and town?'

'Forerun thy peers, thy time, and let  
Thy feet, millenniums hence, be set  
In midst of knowledge, dream'd not yet.

'Thou hast not gain'd a real height,  
Nor art thou nearer to the light,  
Because the scale is infinite.

''Twere better not to breathe or speak,  
Than cry for strength, remaining weak,  
And seem to find, but still to seek.

'Moreover, but to seem to find  
Asks what thou lackest, thought resign'd,  
A healthy frame, a quiet mind.'

I said, 'When I am gone away,  
'He dared not tarry,' men will say,  
Doing dishonour to my clay.'

'This is more vile,' he made reply,  
'To breathe and loathe, to live and  
sigh,  
Than once from dread of pain to die.

'Sick art thou — a divided will  
Still heaping on the fear of ill  
The fear of men, a coward still.

'Do men love thee? Art thou so bound  
To men, that how thy name may sound  
Will vex thee lying underground?'

'The memory of the wither'd leaf  
In endless time is scarce more brief  
Than of the garner'd Autumn-sheaf.

'Go, vexed Spirit, sleep in trust;  
The right ear, that is fill'd with dust,  
Hears little of the false or just.'

'Hard task, to pluck resolve,' I cried,  
'From emptiness and the waste wide  
Of that abyss, or scornful pride!

'Nay — rather yet that I could raise  
One hope that warm'd me in the days  
While still I yearn'd for human praise.

'When, wide in soul and bold of tongue,  
Among the tents I paused and sung,  
The distant battle flash'd and rung.

'I sung the joyful Pæan clear,  
And, sitting, burnish'd without fear  
The brand, the buckler, and the spear —

'Waiting to strive a happy strife,  
To war with falsehood to the knife,  
And not to lose the good of life —

'Some hidden principle to move,  
To put together, part and prove,  
And mete the bounds of hate and love —

'As far as might be, to carve out  
Free space for every human doubt,  
That the whole mind might orb about —

'To search thro' all I felt or saw,  
The springs of life, the depths of awe,  
And reach the law within the law :

'At least, not rotting like a weed,  
But, having sown some generous seed,  
Fruitful of further thought and deed,

'To pass, when Life her light withdraws,  
Not void of righteous self-applause,  
Nor merely in a selfish cause —

'In some good cause, not in mine own,  
To perish, wept for, honour'd, known,  
And like a warrior overthrown;

'Whose eyes are dim with glorious tears,  
When soil'd with noble dust, he hears  
His country's war-song thrill his ears :

'Then dying of a mortal stroke,  
What time the foeman's line is broke,  
And all the war is roll'd in smoke.

'Yea!' said the voice, 'thy dream was  
good,  
While thou abodest in the bud.  
It was the stirring of the blood.

'If Nature put not forth her power  
About the opening of the flower,  
Who is it that could live an hour?

'Then comes the check, the change, the  
fall,  
Pain rises up, old pleasures pall.  
There is one remedy for all.

'Yet hadst thou, thro' enduring pain,  
Link'd month to month with such a chain  
Of knitted purport, all were vain.

'Thou hadst not between death and birth  
Dissolved the riddle of the earth.  
So were thy labour little-worth.

'That men with knowledge merely play'd  
I told thee — hardly nigher made,  
Tho' scaling slow from grade to grade;

'Much less this dreamer, deaf and blind,  
Named man, may hope some truth to find,  
That bears relation to the mind.

'For every worm beneath the moon  
Draws different threads, and late and  
soon  
Spins, toiling out his own cocoon.

'Cry, faint not : either Truth is born  
Beyond the polar gleam forlorn,  
Or in the gateways of the morn.

'Cry, faint not, climb: the summits slope  
Beyond the furthest flights of hope,  
Wrapt in dense cloud from base to cope.

'Sometimes a little corner shines,  
As over rainy mist inclines  
A gleaming crag with belts of pines.

'I will go forward, sayest thou,  
I shall not fail to find her now.  
Look up, the fold is on her brow.

'If straight thy track, or if oblique,  
Thou know'st not. Shadows thou dost  
strike,  
Embracing cloud, Ixion-like;

'And owning but a little more  
Than beasts, abidest lame and poor,  
Calling thyself a little lower

'Than angels. Cease to wail and brawl!  
Why inch by inch to darkness crawl?  
There is one remedy for all.'

'O dull, one-sided voice,' said I,  
'Wilt thou make everything a lie,  
To flatter me that I may die?

'I know that age to age succeeds,  
Blowing a noise of tongues and deeds,  
A dust of systems and of creeds.

'I cannot hide that some have striven,  
Achieving calm, to whom was given  
The joy that mixes man with Heaven :

'Who, rowing hard against the stream,  
Saw distant gates of Eden gleam,  
And did not dream it was a dream;

'But heard, by secret transport led,  
Ev'n in the charnels of the dead,  
The murmur of the fountain-head —

'Which did accomplish their desire,  
Bore and forebore, and did not tire,  
Like Stephen, an unquenched fire.

'He heeded not reviling tones,  
Nor sold his heart to idle moans,  
Tho' cursed and scorn'd, and bruised  
with stones:

'But looking upward, full of grace,  
He pray'd, and from a happy place  
God's glory smote him on the face.'

The sullen answer slid betwixt:  
'Not that the grounds of hope were fix'd,  
The elements were kindlier mix'd.'

I said, 'I toil beneath the curse,  
But, knowing not the universe,  
I fear to slide from bad to worse.

'And that, in seeking to undo  
One riddle, and to find the true,  
I knit a hundred others new:

'Or that this anguish fleeting hence,  
Unmanacled from bonds of sense,  
Be fix'd and froz'n to permanence:

'For I go, weak from suffering here:  
Naked I go, and void of cheer:  
What is it that I may not fear?'

'Consider well,' the voice replied,  
'His face, that two hours since hath  
died;  
Wilt thou find passion, pain or pride?

'Will he obey when one commands?  
Or answer should one press his hands  
He answers not, nor understands.

'His palms are folded on his breast:  
There is no other thing express'd  
But long disquiet merged in rest.

'His lips are very mild and meek:  
Tho' one should smite him on the cheek,  
And on the mouth, he will not speak.

'His little daughter, whose sweet face  
He kiss'd, taking his last embrace,  
Becomes dishonour to her race —

'His sons grow up that bear his name,  
Some grow to honour, some to shame, —  
But he is chill to praise or blame.

'He will not hear the north-wind rave,  
Nor, moaning, household shelter crave  
From winter rains that beat his grave.

'High up the vapours fold and swim:  
About him broods the twilight dim:  
The place he knew forgetteth him.'

'If all be dark, vague voice,' I said,  
'These things are wrapt in doubt and  
dread,  
Nor canst thou show the dead are dead.

'The sap dries up; the plant declines.  
A deeper tale my heart divines.  
Know I not Death? the outward signs?

'I found him when my years were few;  
A shadow on the graves I knew,  
And darkness in the village yew.

'From grave to grave the shadow crept:  
In her still place the morning wept:  
Touch'd by his feet the daisy slept.

'The simple senses crown'd his head:  
"Omega! thou art Lord," they said,  
"We find no motion in the dead."

'Why, if man rot in dreamless ease,  
Should that plain fact, as taught by  
these,  
Not make him sure that he shall cease?

'Who forged that other influence,  
That heat of inward evidence,  
By which he doubts against the sense?

'He owns the fatal gift of eyes,  
That read his spirit blindly wise,  
Not simple as a thing that dies.

'Here sits he shaping wings to fly:  
His heart forebodes a mystery:  
He names the name Eternity.

'That type of Perfect in his mind  
In Nature can he nowhere find.  
He sows himself on every wind.

' He seems to hear a Heavenly Friend,  
And thro' thick veils to apprehend  
A labour working to an end.

' The end and the beginning vex  
His reason: many things perplex,  
With motions, checks, and counterchecks.

' He knows a baseness in his blood  
At such strange war with something  
good,  
He may not do the thing he would.

' Heaven opens inward, chasms yawn,  
Vast images in glimmering dawn,  
Half shown, are broken and withdrawn.

' Ah! sure within him and without,  
Could his dark wisdom find it out,  
There must be answer to his doubt,

' But thou canst answer not again.  
With thine own weapon art thou slain,  
Or thou wilt answer but in vain.

' The doubt would rest, I dare not solve.  
In the same circle we revolve.  
Assurance only breeds resolve.'

As when a billow, blown against,  
Falls back, the voice with which I  
fenced  
A little ceased, but recommenced.

' Where wert thou when thy father play'd  
In his free field, and pastime made,  
A merry boy in sun and shade?

' A merry boy they call'd him then,  
He sat upon the knees of men  
In days that never come again.

' Before the little ducts began  
To feed thy bones with lime, and ran  
Their course, till thou wert also man:

' Who took a wife, who rear'd his race,  
Whose wrinkles gather'd on his face,  
Whose troubles number with his days:

' A life of nothings, nothing-worth,  
From that first nothing ere his birth  
To that last nothing under earth!'

' These words,' I said, ' are like the rest;  
No certain clearness, but at best  
A vague suspicion of the breast:

' But if I grant, thou mightst defend  
The thesis which thy words intend —  
That to begin implies to end;

' Yet how should I for certain hold,  
Because my memory is so cold,  
That I first was in human mould?

' I cannot make this matter plain,  
But I would shoot, howe'er in vain,  
A random arrow from the brain.

' It may be that no life is found,  
Which only to one engine bound  
Falls off, but cycles always round.

' As old mythologies relate,  
Some draught of Lethe might await  
The slipping thro' from state to state.

' As here we find in trances, men  
Forget the dream that happens then,  
Until they fall in trance again,

' So might we, if our state were such  
As one before, remember much,  
For those two likes might meet and  
touch.

' But, if I lapsed from nobler place,  
Some legend of a fallen race  
Alone might hint of my disgrace;

' Some vague emotion of delight  
In gazing up an Alpine height,  
Some yearning toward the lamps of  
night;

' Or if thro' lower lives I came —  
Tho' all experience past became  
Consolidate in mind and frame —

' I might forget my weaker lot;  
For is not our first year forgot?  
The haunts of memory echo not.

' And men, whose reason long was blind,  
From cells of madness unconfined,  
Oft lose whole years of darker mind.

' Much more, if first I floated free,  
As naked essence, must I be  
Incompetent of memory :

' For memory dealing but with time,  
And he with matter, could she climb  
Beyond her own material prime ?

' Moreover, something is or seems,  
That touches me with mystic gleams,  
Like glimpses of forgotten dreams —

' Of something felt, like something here;  
Of something done, I know not where;  
Such as no language may declare.'

The still voice laugh'd. ' I talk,' said  
he,  
' Not with thy dreams. Suffice it thee  
Thy pain is a reality.'

' But thou,' said I, ' hast missed thy  
mark,  
Who sought'st to wreck my mortal ark,  
By making all the horizon dark.

' Why not set forth, if I should do  
This rashness, that which might ensue  
With this old soul in organs new ?

' Whatever crazy sorrow saith,  
No life that breathes with human breath  
Has ever truly long'd for death.

' 'Tis life, whereof our nerves are scant,  
Oh life, not death, for which we pant;  
More life, and fuller, that I want.'

I ceased, and sat as one forlorn.  
Then said the voice, in quiet scorn,  
' Behold, it is the Sabbath morn.'

And I arose, and I released  
The casement, and the light increased  
With freshness in the dawning east.

Like soften'd airs that blowing steal,  
When meres begin to uncongeal,  
The sweet church bells began to peal.

On to God's house the people prest :  
Passing the place where each must rest,  
Each enter'd like a welcome guest.

One walk'd between his wife and child,  
With measured footfall firm and mild,  
And now and then he gravely smiled.

The prudent partner of his blood  
Lean'd on him, faithful, gentle, good,  
Wearing the rose of womanhood.

And in their double love secure,  
The little maiden walk'd demure,  
Pacing with downward eyelids pure.

These three made unity so sweet,  
My frozen heart began to beat,  
Remembering its ancient heat.

I blest them, and they wander'd on :  
I spoke, but answer came there none :  
The dull and bitter voice was gone.

A second voice was at mine ear,  
A little whisper silver-clear,  
A murmur, ' Be of better cheer.'

As from some blissful neighbourhood,  
A notice faintly understood,  
' I see the end, and know the good.'

A little hint to solace woe,  
A hint, a whisper breathing low,  
' I may not speak of what I know.'

Like an Æolian harp that wakes  
No certain air, but overtakes  
Far thought with music that it makes :

Such seem'd the whisper at my side :  
' What is it thou knowest, sweet voice ?'  
I cried.

' A hidden hope,' the voice replied :

So heavenly-toned, that in that hour  
From out my sullen heart a power  
Broke, like the rainbow from the  
shower,

To feel, altho' no tongue can prove,  
That every cloud, that spreads above  
And veileth love, itself is love.

And forth into the fields I went,  
And Nature's living motion lent  
The pulse of hope to discontent.

I wonder'd at the bounteous hours,  
The slow result of winter showers:  
You scarce could see the grass for  
flowers.

I wonder'd, while I paced along:  
The woods were fill'd so full with song,  
There seem'd no room for sense of  
wrong;

And all so variously wrought,  
I marvell'd how the mind was brought  
To anchor by one gloomy thought;

And wherefore rather I made choice  
To commune with that barren voice,  
Than him that said, 'Rejoice! Rejoice!'

#### THE MILLER'S DAUGHTER.

I SEE the wealthy miller yet,  
His double chin, his portly size,  
And who that knew him could forget  
The busy wrinkles round his eyes?  
The slow wise smile that, round about  
His dusty forehead drily curl'd,  
Seem'd half-within and half-without,  
And full of dealings with the world?

In yonder chair I see him sit,  
Three fingers round the old silver cup —  
I see his gray eyes twinkle yet  
At his own jest — gray eyes lit up  
With summer lightnings of a soul  
So full of summer warmth, so glad,  
So healthy, sound, and clear and whole,  
His memory scarce can make me sad.

Yet fill my glass: give me one kiss:  
My own sweet Alice, we must die.  
There's somewhat in this world amiss  
Shall be unriddled by and by.  
There's somewhat flows to us in life,  
But more is taken quite away.  
Pray, Alice, pray, my darling wife,  
That we may die the self-same day.

Have I not found a happy earth?  
I least should breathe a thought of  
pain.  
Would God renew me from my birth  
I'd almost live my life again.

So sweet it seems with thee to walk,  
And once again to woo thee mine —  
It seems in after-dinner talk  
Across the walnuts and the wine —

To be the long and listless boy  
Late-left an orphan of the squire,  
Where this old mansion mounted high  
Looks down upon the village spire:  
For even here, where I and you  
Have lived and loved alone so long,  
Each morn my sleep was broken thro'  
By some wild skylark's matin song.

And oft I heard the tender dove  
In firry woodlands making moan;  
But ere I saw your eyes, my love,  
I had no motion of my own.  
For scarce my life with fancy play'd  
Before I dream'd that pleasant dream —  
Still hither thither idly sway'd  
Like those long mosses in the stream.

Or from the bridge I lean'd to hear  
The milldam rushing down with noise,  
And see the minnows everywhere  
In crystal eddies glance and poise,  
The tall flag-flowers when they sprung  
Below the range of stepping-stones,  
Or those three chestnuts near, that  
hung  
In masses thick with milky cones.

But, Alice, what an hour was that,  
When, after roving in the woods  
('Twas April then), I came and sat  
Below the chestnuts, when their buds  
Were glistening to the breezy blue;  
And on the slope, an absent fool,  
I cast me down, nor thought of you,  
But angled in the higher pool.

A love-song I had somewhere read,  
An echo from a measured strain,  
Beat time to nothing in my head  
From some odd corner of the brain.  
It haunted me, the morning long,  
With weary sameness in the rhymes,  
The phantom of a silent song,  
That went and came a thousand times.

Then leapt a trout. In lazy mood  
I watch'd the little circles die;



They past into the level flood,  
 And there a vision caught my eye;  
 The reflex of a beauteous form,  
 A glowing arm, a gleaming neck,  
 As when a sunbeam wavers warm  
 Within the dark and dimpled beck

For you remember, you had set,  
 That morning, on the casement-edge  
 A long green box of mignonette,  
 And you were leaning from the ledge  
 And when I raised my eyes, above  
 They met with two so full and bright—  
 Such eyes! I swear to you, my love,  
 That these have never lost their light.

I loved, and love dispell'd the fear  
 That I should die an early death:  
 For love possess'd the atmosphere,  
 And fill'd the breast with purer breath.  
 My mother thought, 'What ails the boy?'  
 For I was alter'd, and began  
 To move about the house with joy,  
 And with the certain step of man.

I loved the brimming wave that swam  
 Thro' quiet meadows round the mill,  
 The sleepy pool above the-dam,  
 The pool beneath it never still,  
 The meal-sacks on the whiten'd floor,  
 The dark round of the dripping wheel,  
 The very air about the door  
 Made misty with the floating meal.

And oft in ramblings on the wold,  
 When April nights began to blow,  
 And April's crescent glimmer'd cold,  
 I saw the village lights below;  
 I knew your taper far away,  
 And full at heart of trembling hop  
 From off the wold I came, and lay  
 Upon the freshly-flower'd slope.

The deep brook groan'd beneath the  
 mill;  
 And 'By that lamp,' I thought, 'she  
 sits!'

The white chalk-quarry from the hill  
 Gleam'd to the flying moon by fits.  
 'O that I were beside her now!  
 O will she answer if I call?  
 O would she give me vow for vow,  
 Sweet Alice, if I told her all?'

Sometimes I saw you sit and spin;  
 And, in the pauses of the wind,  
 Sometimes I heard you sing within,  
 Sometimes your shadow cross'd the  
 blind.

At last you rose and moved the light,  
 And the long shadow of the chair  
 Flitted across into the night,  
 And all the casement darken'd there.

But when at last I dared to speak,  
 The lanes, you know, were white with  
 may,  
 Your ripe lips moved not, but your  
 cheek

Flush'd like the coming of the day;  
 And so it was—half-sly, half-shy,  
 You would, and would not, little one!  
 Although I pleaded tenderly,  
 And you and I were all alone.

And slowly was my mother brought  
 To yield consent to my desire:  
 She wish'd me happy, but she thought  
 I might have look'd a little higher;  
 And I was young—too young to wed:  
 'Yet must I love her for your sake;  
 Go fetch your Alice here,' she said:  
 Her eyelid quiver'd as she spake.

And down I went to fetch my bride:  
 But, Alice, you were ill at ease;  
 This dress and that by turns you tried,  
 Too fearful that you should not please.  
 I loved you better for your fears,  
 I knew you could not look but well;  
 And dews, that would have fall'n in  
 tears,  
 I kiss'd away before they fell.

I watch'd the little flutterings,  
 The doubt my mother would not see;  
 She spoke at large of many things,  
 And at the last she spoke of me;  
 And turning look'd upon your face,  
 As near this door you sat apart,  
 And rose, and, with a silent grace  
 Approaching, press'd you heart to heart

Ah, well—but sing the foolish song  
 I gave you, Alice, on the day  
 When, arm in arm, we went along,  
 A pensive pair, and you were gay

With bridal flowers — that I may seem,  
As in the nights of old, to lie  
Beside the mill-wheel in the stream,  
While those full chestnuts whisper by.

It is the miller's daughter,  
And she is grown so dear, so dear,  
That I would be the jewel  
That trembles in her ear:  
For hid in ringlets day and night,  
I'd touch her neck so warm and white.

And I would be the girdle  
About her dainty dainty waist,  
And her heart would beat against me,  
In sorrow and in rest:  
And I should know if it beat right,  
I'd clasp it round so close and tight.

And I would be the necklace,  
And all day long to fall and rise  
Upon her balmy bosom,  
With her laughter or her sighs,  
And I would lie so light, so light,  
I scarce should be unclasp'd at night.

A trifle, sweet! which true love spells —  
True love interprets — right alone.  
His light upon the letter dwells,  
For all the spirit is his own.  
So, if I waste words now, in truth  
You must blame Love. His early rage  
Had force to make me rhyme in youth,  
And makes me talk too much in age.

And now those vivid hours are gone,  
Like mine own life to me thou art,  
While Past and Present, wound in one,  
Do make a garland for the heart:  
So sing that other song I made,  
Half-anger'd with my happy lot,  
The day, when in the chestnut shade  
I found the blue Forget-me-not.

Love that hath us in the net,  
Can he pass, and we forget?  
Many suns arise and set.  
Many a chance the years beget.  
Love the gift is Love the debt.  
Even so.  
Love is hurt with jar and fret.  
Love is made a vague regret.  
Eyes with idle tears are wet.  
Idle habit links us yet.  
What is love? for we forget:  
Ah, no! no!

Look thro' mine eyes with thine. True  
wife,

Round my true heart thine arms entwine  
My other dearer life in life,  
Look thro' my very soul with thine!  
Untouch'd with any shade of years,  
May those kind eyes for ever dwell!  
They have not shed a many tears,  
Dear eyes, since first I knew them  
well.

Yet tears they shed: they had their part  
Of sorrow: for when time was ripe,  
The still affection of the heart  
Became an outward breathing type,  
That into stillness past again,  
And left a want unknown before;  
Although the loss had brought us pain,  
That loss but made us love the more,

With farther lookings on. The kiss,  
The woven arms, seem but to be  
Weak symbols of the settled bliss,  
The comfort, I have found in thee:  
But that God bless thee, dear — who  
wrought  
Two spirits to one equal mind —  
With blessings beyond hope or thought,  
With blessings which no words can find.

Arise, and let us wander forth,  
To yon old mill across the wolds;  
For look, the sunset, south and north,  
Winds all the vale in rosy folds,  
And fires your narrow casement glass,  
Touching the sullen pool below:  
On the chalk-hill the bearded grass  
Is dry and dewless. Let us go.

#### FATIMA.

O LOVE, Love, Love! O withering might!  
O sun, that from thy noonday height  
Shudderest when I strain my sight,  
Throbbing thro' all thy heat and light,  
Lo, falling from my constant mind,  
Lo, parch'd and wither'd, deaf and  
blind,  
I whirl like leaves in roaring wind.

Last night I wasted hateful hours  
Below the city's eastern towers:

I thirsted for the brooks, the showers :  
 I roll'd among the tender flowers :  
 I crush'd them on my breast, my mouth ;  
 I look'd athwart the burning drouth  
 Of that long desert to the south.

Last night, when some one spoke his  
 name,

From my swift blood that went and came  
 A thousand little shafts of flame  
 Were shiver'd in my narrow frame.

O Love, O fire ! once he drew  
 With one long kiss my whole soul thro'  
 My lips, as sunlight drinketh dew.

Before he mounts the hill, I know  
 He cometh quickly : from below  
 Sweet gales, as from deep gardens, blow  
 Before him, striking on my brow.

In my dry brain my spirit soon,  
 Down-deepening from swoon to swoon,  
 Faints like a dazzled morning moon.

The wind sounds like a silver wire,  
 And from beyond the noon a fire  
 Is pour'd upon the hills, and nigher  
 The skies stoop down in their desire ;  
 And, isled in sudden seas of light,  
 My heart, pierced thro' with fierce  
 delight,  
 Bursts into blossom in his sight.

My-whole soul waiting silently,  
 All naked in a sultry sky,  
 Droops blinded with his shining eye :  
 I *will* possess him or will die.

I will grow round him in his place,  
 Grow, live, die looking on his face,  
 Die, dying clasp'd in his embrace.

## CENONE.

THERE lies a vale in Ida, lovelier  
 Than all the valleys of Ionian hills.  
 The swimming vapour slopes athwart the  
 glen,  
 Puts forth an arm, and creeps from pine  
 to pine,  
 And loiters, slowly drawn. On either  
 hand  
 The lawns and meadow-ledges midway  
 down

Hang rich in flowers, and far below them  
 roars

The long brook falling thro' the clov'n  
 ravine

In cataract after cataract to the sea.  
 Behind the valley topmost Gargarus  
 Stands up and takes the morning : but in  
 front

The gorges, opening wide apart, reveal  
 Troas and Ilion's column'd citadel,  
 The crown of Troas.

Hither came at noon

Mournful Cenone, wandering forlorn  
 Of Paris, once her playmate on the hills.  
 Her cheek had lost the rose, and round  
 her neck

Floated her hair or seem'd to float in rest.  
 She, leaning on a fragment twined with  
 vine,

Sang to the stillness, till the mountain-  
 shade

Sloped downward to her seat from the  
 upper cliff.

'O mother Ida, many-fountain'd Ida,  
 Dear mother Ida, harken ere I die.  
 For now the noonday quiet holds the hill :  
 The grasshopper is silent in the grass :  
 The lizard, with his shadow on the stone,  
 Rests like a shadow, and the winds are  
 dead.

The purple flower droops: the golden  
 bee

Is lily-cradled : I alone awake.

My eyes are full of tears, my heart of love,  
 My heart is breaking, and my eyes are  
 dim,

And I am all aweary of my life.

'O mother Ida, many-fountain'd Ida,  
 Dear mother Ida, harken ere I die.  
 Hear me, O Earth, hear me, O Hills, O  
 Caves

That house the cold crown'd snake ! O  
 mountain brooks,

I am the daughter of a River-God,  
 Hear me, for I will speak, and build up all  
 My sorrow with my song, as yonder walls  
 Rose slowly to a music slowly breathed,  
 A cloud that gather'd shape : for it may be  
 That, while I speak of it, a little while  
 My heart may wander from its deeper  
 woe.

'O mother Ida, many-fountain'd Ida,  
Dear mother Ida, harken ere I die.  
I waited underneath the dawning hills,  
Aloft the mountain lawn was dewy-dark,  
And dewy-dark aloft the mountain pine:  
Beautiful Paris, evil-hearted Paris,  
Leading a jet-black goat white-horn'd,  
white-hooved,  
Came up from reedy Simois all alone.

'O mother Ida, harken ere I die.  
Far-off the torrent call'd me from the cleft:  
Far up the solitary morning smote  
The streaks of virgin snow. With down-  
dropt eyes  
I sat alone: white-breasted like a star  
Fronting the dawn he moved; a leopard  
skin  
Droop'd from his shoulder, but his sunny  
hair  
Cluster'd about his temples like a God's:  
And his cheek brighten'd as the foam-bow  
brightens  
When the wind blows the foam, and all  
my heart  
Went forth to embrace him coming ere  
he came.

'Dear mother Ida, harken ere I die.  
He smiled, and opening out his milk-  
white palm  
Disclosed a fruit of pure Hesperian gold,  
That smelt ambrosially, and while I look'd  
And listen'd, the full-flowing river of  
speech  
Came down upon my heart.

"My own Ænone,  
Beautiful-brow'd Ænone, my own soul,  
Behold this fruit, whose gleaming rind  
ingrav'n  
'For the most fair,' would seem to  
award it thine,  
As lovelier than whatever Oread haunt  
The knolls of Ida, loveliest in all grace  
Of movement, and the charm of married  
brows."

'Dear mother Ida, harken ere I die.  
He prest the blossom of his lips to mine,  
And added "This was cast upon the  
board,  
When all the full-faced presence of the  
Gods

Ranged in the halls of Peleus; where-  
upon  
Rose feud, with question unto whom  
'twere due:  
But light-foot Iris brought it yester-eve,  
Delivering that to me, by common voice  
Elected umpire, Herè comes to-day,  
Pallas and Aphroditè, claiming each  
This meed of fairest. Thou, within the  
cave  
Behind yon whispering tuft of oldest pine,  
Mayst well behold them unbeheld, un-  
heard  
Hear all, and see thy Paris judge of  
Gods."

'Dear mother Ida, harken ere I die.  
It was the deep midnight: one silvery  
cloud  
Had lost his way between the piney sides  
Of this long glen. Then to the bower  
they came,  
Naked they came to that smooth-swarded  
bower,  
And at their feet the crocus brake like  
fire,  
Violet, amaracus, and asphodel,  
Lotos and lilies: and a wind arose,  
And overhead the wandering ivy and  
vine,  
This way and that, in many a wild festoon  
Ran riot, garlanding the gnarled boughs  
With bunch and berry and flower thro'  
and thro'.

'O mother Ida, harken ere I die.  
On the tree-tops a crested peacock lit,  
And o'er him flow'd a golden cloud, and  
lean'd  
Upon him, slowly dropping fragrant dew.  
Then first I heard the voice of her, to  
whom  
Coming thro' Heaven, like a light that  
grows  
Larger and clearer, with one mind the  
Gods  
Rise up for reverence. She to Paris made  
Proffer of royal power, ample rule  
Unquestion'd, overflowing revenue  
Wherewith to embellish state, "from  
many a vale  
And river-sunder'd champaign clothed  
with corn,

Or labour'd mine undrainable of ore.  
 Honour," she said, "and homage, tax  
 and toll,  
 From many an inland town and haven  
 large,  
 Mast-throng'd beneath her shadowing  
 citadel  
 In glassy bays among her tallest towers."

'O mother Ida, harken ere I die.  
 Still she spake on and still she spake of  
 power,  
 "Which in all action is the end of all;  
 Power fitted to the season; wisdom-  
 bred  
 And throned of wisdom — from all neigh-  
 bour crowns  
 Alliance and allegiance, till thy hand  
 Fail from the sceptre-staff. Such boon  
 from me,  
 From me, Heaven's Queen, Paris, to  
 thee king-born,  
 A shepherd all thy life but yet king-born,  
 Should come most welcome, seeing men,  
 in power  
 Only, are likest gods, who have attain'd  
 Rest in a happy place and quiet seats  
 Above the thunder, with undying bliss  
 In knowledge of their own supremacy."

'Dear mother Ida, harken ere I die.  
 She ceased, and Paris held the costly  
 fruit  
 Out at arm's length, so much the thought  
 of power  
 Flatter'd his spirit; but Pallas where she  
 stood  
 Somewhat apart, her clear and bared  
 limbs  
 O'erthwarted with the brazen-headed  
 spear  
 Upon her pearly shoulder leaning cold,  
 The while, above, her full and earnest  
 eye  
 Over her snow-cold breast and angry  
 cheek  
 Kept watch, waiting decision, made reply.

"Self-reverence, self-knowledge, self-  
 control,  
 These three alone lead life to sovereign  
 power.  
 Yet not for power (power of herself

Would come uncall'd for) but to live by  
 law,  
 Acting the law we live by without fear;  
 And because right is right, to follow  
 right  
 Were wisdom in the scorn of conse-  
 quence."

'Dear mother Ida, harken ere I die.  
 Again she said: "I woo thee not with  
 gifts.  
 Sequel of guerdon could not alter me  
 To fairer. Judge thou me by what I  
 am,  
 So shalt thou find me fairest.

Yet, indeed  
 If gazing on divinity disrobed  
 Thy mortal eyes are frail to judge of fair,  
 Unbias'd by self-profit, oh! rest the sure,  
 That I shall love thee well and cleave to  
 thee,  
 So that my vigour, wedded to thy blood,  
 Shall strike within thy pulses like a  
 God's,  
 To push thee forward thro' a life of  
 shocks,  
 Dangers, and deeds, until endurance grow  
 Sinew'd with action, and the full-grown  
 will,  
 Circled thro' all experiences, pure law,  
 Commensure perfect freedom."

'Here she ceas'd,  
 And Paris ponder'd, and I cried, "O  
 Paris,  
 Give it to Pallas!" but he heard me not,  
 Or hearing would not hear me, woe is me!

'O mother Ida, many-fountain'd Ida,  
 Dear mother Ida, harken ere I die.  
 Idalian Aphrodite beautiful,  
 Fresh as the foam, new-bathed in Paphian  
 wells,  
 With rosy slender fingers backward drew  
 From her warm brows and bosom her  
 deep hair  
 Ambrosial, golden round her lucid throat  
 And shoulder: from the violets her light  
 foot  
 Shone rosy-white, and o'er her rounded  
 form  
 Between the shadows of the vine-bunches  
 Floated the glowing sunlights, as she  
 moved.

'Dear mother Ida, harken ere I die.  
 She with a subtle smile in her mild eyes,  
 The herald of her triumph, drawing  
 nigh  
 Half-whisper'd in his ear, "I promise  
 thee  
 The fairest and most loving wife in  
 Greece."  
 She spoke and laugh'd: I shut my sight  
 for fear:  
 But when I look'd, Paris had raised his  
 arm,  
 And I beheld great Herè's angry eyes,  
 As she withdrew into the golden cloud,  
 And I was left alone within the bower;  
 And from that time to this I am alone,  
 And I shall be alone until I die.

'Yet, mother Ida, harken ere I die.  
 Fairest — why fairest wife? am I not fair?  
 My love hath told me so a thousand  
 times.  
 Methinks I must be fair, for yesterday,  
 When I past by, a wild and wanton pard,  
 Eyed like the evening star, with playful  
 tail  
 Crouch'd fawning in the weed. Most  
 loving is she?  
 Ah me, my mountain shepherd, that my  
 arms  
 Were wound about thee, and my hot lips  
 prest  
 Close, close to thine in that quick-falling  
 dew  
 Of fruitful kisses, thick as Autumn rains  
 Flash in the pools of whirling Simois.

'O mother, hear me yet before I die.  
 They came, they cut away my tallest  
 pines,  
 My tall dark pines, that plumed the  
 craggy ledge  
 High over the blue gorge, and all between  
 The snowy peak and snow-white cataract  
 Foster'd the callow eaglet — from beneath  
 Whose thick mysterious boughs in the  
 dark morn  
 The panther's roar came muffled, while  
 I sat  
 Low in the valley. Never, never more  
 Shall lone CEnone see the morning mist  
 Sweep thro' them; never see them over-  
 laid

With narrow moon-lit slips of silver cloud,  
 Between the loud stream and the trem-  
 bling stars.

'O mother, hear me yet before I die.  
 I wish that somewhere in the ruin'd folds,  
 Among the fragments tumbled from the  
 glens,  
 Or the dry thickets, I could meet with  
 her  
 The Abominable, that uninvited came  
 Into the fair Peleïan banquet-hall,  
 And cast the golden fruit upon the board,  
 And bred this change; that I might speak  
 my mind,  
 And tell her to her face how much I hate  
 Her presence, hated both of Gods and  
 men.

'O mother, hear me yet before I die.  
 Hath he not sworn his love a thousand  
 times,  
 In this green valley, under this green hill,  
 Ev'n on this hand, and sitting on this  
 stone?  
 Seal'd it with kisses? water'd it with  
 tears?  
 O happy tears, and how unlike to these!  
 O happy Heaven, how canst thou see my  
 face?  
 O happy earth, how canst thou bear my  
 weight?  
 O death, death, death, thou ever-floating  
 cloud,  
 There are enough unhappy on this earth;  
 Pass by the happy souls, that love to live:  
 I pray thee, pass before my light of life,  
 And shadow all my soul, that I may die.  
 Thou weighest heavy on the heart within,  
 Weigh heavy on my eyelids: let me die.

'O mother, hear me yet before I die.  
 I will not die alone, for fiery thoughts  
 Do shape themselves within me, more and  
 more,  
 Whereof I catch the issue, as I hear  
 Dead sounds at night come from the in-  
 most hills,  
 Like footsteps upon wool. I dimly see  
 My far-off doubtful purpose, as a mother  
 Conjectures of the features of her child  
 Ere it is born: her child! — a shudder  
 comes



Across me: never child be born of me,  
Unblest, to vex me with his father's eyes!

'O mother, hear me yet before I die.  
Hear me, O earth. I will not die alone,  
Lest their shrill happy laughter come to  
me

Walking the cold and starless road of  
Death

Uncomforted, leaving my ancient love  
With the Greek woman. I will rise and  
go

Down into Troy, and ere the stars come  
forth

Talk with the wild Cassandra, for she says  
A fire dances before her, and a sound  
Rings ever in her ears of armed men.  
What this may be I know not, but I  
know

That, wheresoe'er I am by night and day,  
All earth and air seem only burning fire.'

### THE SISTERS.

WE were two daughters of one race:  
She was the fairest in the face:

The wind is blowing in turret and tree.  
They were together, and she fell;  
Therefore revenge became me well.

O the Earl was fair to see!

She died: she went to burning flame:  
She mix'd her ancient blood with shame.

The wind is howling in turret and tree.  
Whole weeks and months, and early and  
late,

To win his love I lay in wait:  
O the Earl was fair to see!

I made a feast; I bade him come;  
I won his love, I brought him home.

The wind is roaring in turret and tree.  
And after supper, on a bed,  
Upon my lap he laid his head:

O the Earl was fair to see!

I kissed his eyelids into rest:  
His ruddy cheek upon my breast.

The wind is raging in turret and tree.  
I hated him with the hate of hell,  
But I loved his beauty passing well.

O the Earl was fair to see!

I rose up in the silent night:  
I made my dagger sharp and bright.

The wind is raving in turret and tree.  
As half-asleep his breath he drew,  
Three times I stabb'd him thro' and thro'.  
O the Earl was fair to see!

I curl'd and comb'd his comely head,  
He look'd so grand when he was dead.

The wind is blowing in turret and  
tree.

I wrapt his body in the sheet,  
And laid him at his mother's feet.  
O the Earl was fair to see!

TO — .

WITH THE FOLLOWING POEM.

I SEND you here a sort of allegory,  
(For you will understand it) of a soul,  
A sinful soul possess'd of many gifts,  
A spacious garden full of flowering weeds,  
A glorious Devil, large in heart and brain,  
That did love Beauty only (Beauty seen  
In all varieties of mould and mind),  
And Knowledge for its beauty; or if  
Good,

Good only for its beauty, seeing not  
That Beauty, Good, and Knowledge are  
three sisters

That dote upon each other, friends to  
man,

Living together under the same roof,  
And never can be sunder'd without tears.  
And he that shuts Love out, in turn shall  
be

Shut out from Love, and on her threshold  
lie,

Howling in outer darkness. Not for this  
Was common clay ta'en from the common  
earth

Moulded by God, and temper'd with the  
tears

Of angels to the perfect shape of man.

### THE PALACE OF ART.

I BUILT my soul a lordly pleasure-house,  
Wherein at ease for aye to dwell.

I said, 'O Soul, make merry and carouse,  
Dear soul, for all is well.'

A huge crag-platform, smooth as burnish'd  
brass

I chose. The ranged ramparts bright  
From level meadow-bases of deep grass  
Suddenly scaled the light.

Thereon I built it firm. Of ledge or  
shelf

The rock rose clear, or winding stair.  
My soul would live alone unto herself  
In her high palace there.

And 'While the world runs round and  
round,' I said,

'Reign thou apart, a quiet king,  
Still as, while Saturn whirls, his stedfast  
shade

Sleeps on his luminous ring.'

To which my soul made answer readily:  
'Trust me, in bliss I shall abide

In this great mansion, that is built for me,  
So royal-rich and wide.'

\* \* \* \*  
\* \* \* \*

Four courts I made, East, West and South  
and North,

In each a squared lawn, wherefrom  
The golden gorge of dragons spouted  
forth

A flood of fountain-foam.

And round the cool green courts there  
ran a row

Of cloisters, branch'd like mighty  
woods,

Echoing all night to that sonorous flow  
Of spouted fountain-floods.

And round the roofs a gilded gallery

That lent broad verge to distant lands,  
Far as the wild swan wings, to where the  
sky

Dipt down to sea and sands.

From those four jets four currents in one  
swell

Across the mountain stream'd below  
In misty folds, that floating as they fell  
Lit up a torrent-bow.

And high on every peak a statue seem'd  
To hang on tiptoe, tossing up

A cloud of incense of all odour steam'd  
From out a golden cup.

So that she thought, 'And who shall  
gaze upon

My palace with unblinded eyes,  
While this great bow will waver in the sun,  
And that sweet incense rise?'

For that sweet incense rose and never  
fail'd,

And, while day sank or mounted higher,  
The light aerial gallery, golden-rail'd,  
Burnt like a fringe of fire.

Likewise the deep-set windows, stain'd  
and traced,

Would seem slow-flaming crimson fires  
From shadow'd grotts of arches interlaced,  
And tipt with frost-like spires.

\* \* \* \*  
\* \* \* \*

Full of long-sounding corridors it was,  
That over-vaulted grateful gloom,

Thro' which the livelong day my soul  
did pass,  
Well-pleased, from room to room.

Full of great rooms and small the palace  
stood,

All various, each a perfect whole  
From living Nature, fit for every mood  
And change of my still soul.

For some were hung with arras green  
and blue,

Showing a gaudy summer-morn,  
Where with puff'd cheek the belted hunter  
blew

His wreathed bugle-horn.

One seem'd all dark and red—a tract of  
sand,

And some one pacing there alone,  
Who paced for ever in a glimmering land,  
Lit with a low large moon.

One show'd an iron coast and angry  
waves.

You seem'd to hear them climb and fall  
And roar rock-thwarted under bellowing  
caves,

Beneath the windy wall.

And one, a full-fed river winding slow  
 By herds upon an endless plain,  
 The ragged rims of thunder brooding  
 low,  
 With shadow-streaks of rain.

And one, the reapers at their sultry toil.  
 In front they bound the sheaves. Behind  
 Were realms of upland, prodigal in oil,  
 And hoary to the wind.

And one a foreground black with stones  
 and slags,  
 Beyond, a line of heights, and higher  
 All barr'd with long white cloud the scornful crags,  
 And highest, snow and fire.

And one, an English home—gray twilight pour'd  
 On dewy pastures, dewy trees,  
 Softer than sleep—all things in order  
 stored,  
 A haunt of ancient Peace.

Nor these alone, but every landscape  
 fair,  
 As fit for every mood of mind,  
 Or gay, or grave, or sweet, or stern, was  
 there  
 Not less than truth design'd.  
 \* \* \* \*  
 \* \* \* \*

Or the maid-mother by a crucifix,  
 In tracts of pasture sunny-warm,  
 Beneath branch-work of costly sardonix  
 Sat smiling, babe in arm.

Or in a clear-wall'd city on the sea,  
 Near gilded organ-pipes, her hair  
 Wound with white roses, slept St. Cecily;  
 An angel look'd at her.

Or thronging all one porch of Paradise  
 A group of Houris bow'd to see  
 The dying Islamite, with hands and eyes  
 That said, We wait for thee.

Or mythic Uther's deeply-wounded son  
 In some fair space of sloping greens  
 Lay, dozing in the vale of Avalou,  
 And watch'd by weeping queens.

Or hollowing one hand against his ear,  
 To list a foot-fall, ere he saw  
 The wood-nymph, stay'd the Ausonian  
 king to hear  
 Of wisdom and of law.

Or over hills with peaky tops engrail'd,  
 And many a tract of palm and rice,  
 The throne of Indian Cama slowly sail'd  
 A summer fann'd with spice.

Or sweet Europa's mantle blew unclasp'd,  
 From off her shoulder backward borne:  
 From one hand droop'd a crocus: one  
 hand grasp'd  
 The mild bull's golden horn.

Or else flush'd Ganymede, his rosy thigh  
 Half-buried in the Eagle's down,  
 Sole as a flying star shot thro' the sky  
 Above the pillar'd town.

Nor these alone: but every legend fair  
 Which the supreme Caucasian mind  
 Carved out of Nature for itself, was there,  
 Not less than life, design'd.  
 \* \* \* \*  
 \* \* \* \*

Then in the towers I placed great bells  
 that swung,  
 Moved of themselves, with silver sound;  
 And with choice paintings of wise men I  
 hung  
 The royal dais round.

For there was Milton like a seraph strong,  
 Beside him Shakespeare bland and mild;  
 And there the world-worn Dante grasp'd  
 his song,  
 And somewhat grimly smiled.

And there the Ionian father of the rest;  
 A million wrinkles carved his skin;  
 A hundred winters snow'd upon his breast,  
 From cheek and throat and chin.

Above, the fair hall-ceiling stately-set  
 Many an arch high up did lift,  
 And angels rising and descending met  
 With interchange of gift.

Below was all mosaic choicely plann'd  
 With cycles of the human tale

Of this wide world, the times of every land  
So wrought, they will not fail.

The people here, a beast of burden slow,  
Toil'd onward, prick'd with goads and stings;

Here play'd, a tiger, rolling to and fro  
The heads and crowns of kings;

Here rose, an athlete, strong to break or bind

All force in bonds that might endure,  
And here once more like some sick man declined,  
And trusted any cure.

But over these she trod: and those great bells

Began to chime. She took her throne:  
She sat betwixt the shining Oriels,  
To sing her songs alone.

And thro' the topmost Oriels' coloured flame

Two godlike faces gazed below;  
Plato the wise, and large-brow'd Verulam,  
The first of those who know.

And all those names, that in their motion were

Full-welling fountain-heads of change,  
Betwixt the slender shafts were blazon'd fair  
In diverse raiment strange:

Thro' which the lights, rose, amber, emerald, blue,

Flush'd in her temples and her eyes,  
And from her lips, as morn from Memnon,  
drew  
Rivers of melodies.

No nightingale delighteth to prolong

Her low preamble all alone,  
More than my soul to hear her echo'd song  
Throb thro' the ribbed stone;

Singing and murmuring in her feastful mirth,

Joying to feel herself alive,  
Lord over Nature, Lord of the visible earth,  
Lord of the senses five;

Communing with herself: 'All these are mine,

And let the world have peace or wars,  
'Tis one to me.' She—when young night divine

Crown'd dying day with stars,

Making sweet close of his delicious toils—

Lit light in wreaths and anadems,  
And pure quintessences of precious oils .  
In hollow'd moons of gems,

To mimic heaven; and clapt her hands and cried,

'I marvel if my still delight  
In this great house so royal-rich, and wide,  
Be flatter'd to the height.

'O all things fair to sate my various eyes!

O shapes and hues that please me well!

O silent faces of the Great and Wise,  
My Gods, with whom I dwell!

'O God-like isolation which art mine,  
I can but count thee perfect gain,  
What time I watch the darkening droves of swine  
That range on yonder plain.

'In filthy sloughs they roll a prurient skin,  
They graze and wallow, breed and sleep;

And oft some brainless devil enters in,  
And drives them to the deep.'

Then of the moral instinct would she prate  
And of the rising from the dead,  
As hers by right of full-accomplish'd Fate;  
And at the last she said:

'I take possession of man's mind and deed.

I care not what the sects may brawl.

I sit as God holding no form of creed,  
But contemplating all.'

\* \* \* \*

Full oft the riddle of the painful earth

Flash'd thro' her as she sat alone,  
Yet not the less held she her solemn mirth,  
And intellectual throne.

And so she throve and prosper'd: so  
three years

She prosper'd: on the fourth she fell,  
Like Herod, when the shout was in his  
ears,  
Struck thro' with pangs of hell.

Lest she should fail and perish utterly,  
God, before whom ever lie bare  
The abysmal deeps of Personality,  
Plagued her with sore despair.

When she would think, where'er she  
turn'd her sight  
The airy hand confusion wrought,  
Wrote, 'Mene, mene,' and divided quite  
The kingdom of her thought.

Deep dread and loathing of her solitude  
Fell on her, from which mood was  
born  
Scorn of herself; again, from out that  
mood  
Laughter at her self-scorn.

'What! is not this my place of strength,'  
she said,  
'My spacious mansion built for me,  
Whereof the strong foundation-stones  
were laid  
Since my first memory?'

But in dark corners of her palace stood  
Uncertain shapes; and unawares  
On white-eyed phantasms weeping tears  
of blood,  
And horrible nightmares,

And hollow shades, enclosing hearts of  
flame,  
And, with dim fretted foreheads all,  
On corpses three-months-old at noon she  
came,  
That stood against the wall.

A spot of dull stagnation, without light  
Or power of movement, seem'd my soul,  
'Mid onward-sloping motions infinite  
Making for one sure goal.

A still salt pool, lock'd in with bars of  
sand,  
Left on the shore; that hears all night

The plunging seas draw backward from  
the land  
Their moon-led waters white.

A star that with the choral starry dance  
Join'd not, but stood, and standing saw  
The hollow orb of moving Circumstance  
Roll'd round by one fix'd law.

Back on herself her serpent pride had  
curl'd.  
'No voice,' she shriek'd in that lone  
hall,  
'No voice breaks thro' the stillness of  
this world:  
One deep, deep silence all!'

She, mouldering with the dull earth's  
mouldering sod,  
Inwraught tenfold in slothful shame,  
Lay there exiled from eternal God,  
Lost to her place and name;

And death and life she hated equally,  
And nothing saw, for her despair,  
But dreadful time, dreadful eternity,  
No comfort anywhere;

Remaining utterly confused with fears,  
And ever worse with growing time,  
And ever unrelieved by dismal tears,  
And all alone in crime:

Shut up as in a crumbling tomb, girt round  
With blackness as a solid wall,  
Far off she seem'd to hear the dully sound  
Of human footsteps fall.

As in strange lands a traveller walking  
slow,  
In doubt and great perplexity,  
A little before moon-rise hears the low  
Moan of an unknown sea;

And knows not if it be thunder, or a sound  
Of rocks thrown down, or one deep  
cry  
Of great wild beasts; then thinketh, 'I  
have found  
A new land, but I die.'

She howl'd aloud, 'I am on fire within.  
There comes no murmur of reply.

What is it that will take away my sin,  
And save me lest I die?’

So when four years were wholly finished,  
She threw her royal robes away.

‘Make me a cottage in the vale,’ she said,  
‘Where I may mourn and pray.

‘Yet pull not down my palace towers,  
that are

So lightly, beautifully built:  
Perchance I may return with others there  
When I have purged my guilt.’

### LADY CLARA VERE DE VERE.

LADY Clara Vere de Vere,

Of me you shall not win renown:  
You thought to break a country heart  
For pastime, ere you went to town.

At me you smiled, but unbeguiled

I saw the snare, and I retired:  
The daughter of a hundred Earls,  
You are not one to be desired.

Lady Clara Vere de Vere,

I know you proud to bear your name,  
Your pride is yet no mate for mine,

Too proud to care from whence I came.

Nor would I break for your sweet sake

A heart that dotes on truer charms.

A simple maiden in her flower

Is worth a hundred coats-of-arms.

Lady Clara Vere de Vere,

Some meeker pupil you must find,

For were you queen of all that is,

I could not stoop to such a mind.

You sought to prove how I could love,

And my disdain is my reply.

The lion on your old stone gates

Is not more cold to you than I.

Lady Clara Vere de Vere,

You put strange memories in my head.

Not thrice your branching limes have  
blown

Since I beheld young Laurence dead.

Oh your sweet eyes, your low replies:

A great enchantress you may be;

But there was that across his throat  
Which you had hardly cared to see.

Lady Clara Vere de Vere,

When thus he met his mother’s view,

She had the passions of her kind,

She spake some certain truths of you.

Indeed I heard one bitter word

That scarce is fit for you to hear;

Her manners had not that repose

Which stamps the caste of Vere de  
Vere.

Lady Clara Vere de Vere,

There stands a spectre in your hall:

The guilt of blood is at your door:

You changed a wholesome heart to  
gall.

You held your course without remorse,

To make him trust his modest worth,

And, last, you fix’d a vacant stare,

And slew him with your noble birth.

Trust me, Clara Vere de Vere,

From yon blue heavens above us bent

The gardener Adam and his wife

Smile at the claims of long descent.

How’er it be, it seems to me,

’Tis only noble to be good.

Kind hearts are more than coronets,

And simple faith than Norman blood.

I know you, Clara Vere de Vere,

You pine among your halls and towers:

The languid light of your proud eyes

Is wearied of the rolling hours.

In glowing health, with boundless wealth,

But sickening of a vague disease,

You know so ill to deal with time,

You needs must play such pranks as  
these.

Clara, Clara Vere de Vere,

If time be heavy on your hands,

Are there no beggars at your gate,

Nor any poor about your lands?

Oh! teach the orphan-boy to read,

Or teach the orphan-girl to sew,

Pray heaven for a human heart,

And let the foolish yeoman go.



## THE MAY QUEEN.

YOU must wake and call me early, call me early, mother dear;  
To-morrow 'ill be the happiest time of all the glad New-year;  
Of all the glad New-year, mother, the maddest merriest day;  
For I'm to be Queen o' the May, mother, I'm to be Queen o' the May.

There's many a black black eye, they say, but none so bright as mine;  
There's Margaret and Mary, there's Kate and Caroline;  
But I must gather knots of flowers, and buds and garlands gay,  
So I'm to be Queen o' the May, mother, I'm to be Queen o' the May.

I sleep so sound all night, mother, that I shall never wake,  
If you do not call me loud when the day begins to break:  
He thought of that sharp look, mother, I gave him yesterday,  
For I'm to be Queen o' the May, mother, I'm to be Queen o' the May.

As I came up the valley whom think ye should I see,  
But Robin leaning on the bridge beneath the hazel-tree?  
He thought of that sharp look, mother, I gave him yesterday,  
But I'm to be Queen o' the May, mother, I'm to be Queen o' the May.

He thought I was a ghost, mother, for I was all in white,  
And I ran by him without speaking, like a flash of light.  
They call me cruel-hearted, but I care not what they say,  
For I'm to be Queen o' the May, mother, I'm to be Queen o' the May.

They say he's dying all for love, but that can never be:  
They say his heart is breaking, mother — what is that to me?  
There's many a bolder lad 'ill woo me any summer day,  
And I'm to be Queen o' the May, mother, I'm to be Queen o' the May.

Little Effie shall go with me to-morrow to the green,  
And you'll be there, too, mother, to see me made the Queen;  
For the shepherd lads on every side 'ill come from far away,  
And I'm to be Queen o' the May, mother, I'm to be Queen o' the May.

The honeysuckle round the porch has wov'n its wavy bowers,  
And by the meadow-trenches blow the faint sweet cuckoo-flowers;  
And the wild marsh-marigold shines like fire in swamps and hollows gray,  
And I'm to be Queen o' the May, mother, I'm to be Queen o' the May.

The night-winds come and go, mother, upon the meadow-grass,  
And the happy stars above them seem to brighten as they pass;  
There will not be a drop of rain the whole of the livelong day,  
And I'm to be Queen o' the May, mother, I'm to be Queen o' the May.

All the valley, mother, 'ill be fresh and green and still,  
And the cowslip and the crowfoot are over all the hill,  
And the rivulet in the flowery dale 'ill merrily glance and play,  
For I'm to be Queen o' the May, mother, I'm to be Queen o' the May.

So you must wake and call me early, call me early, mother dear,  
 To-morrow 'ill be the happiest time of all the glad New-year:  
 To-morrow 'ill be of all the year the maddest merriest day,  
 For I'm to be Queen o' the May, mother, I'm to be Queen o' the May.

#### NEW-YEAR'S EVE.

If you're waking call me early, call me early, mother dear,  
 For I would see the sun rise upon the glad New-year.  
 It is the last New-year that I shall ever see,  
 Then you may lay me low i' the mould and think no more of me.

To-night I saw the sun set: he set and left behind  
 The good old year, the dear old time, and all my peace of mind;  
 And the New-year's coming up, mother, but I shall never see  
 The blossom on the blackthorn, the leaf upon the tree.

Last May we made a crown of flowers: we had a merry day;  
 Beneath the hawthorn on the green they made me Queen of May;  
 And we danced about the may-pole and in the hazel copse,  
 Till Charles's Wain came out above the tall white chimney-tops.

There's not a flower on all the hills: the frost is on the pane:  
 I only wish to live till the snowdrops come again:  
 I wish the snow would melt and the sun come out on high:  
 I long to see a flower so before the day I die.

The building rook 'ill caw from the windy tall elm-tree,  
 And the tufted plover pipe along the fallow lea,  
 And the swallow 'ill come back again with summer o'er the wave,  
 But I shall lie alone, mother, within the mouldering grave.

Upon the chancel-casement, and upon that grave of mine,  
 In the early early morning the summer sun 'ill shine,  
 Before the red cock crows from the farm upon the hill,  
 When you are warm-asleep, mother, and all the world is still.

When the flowers come again, mother, beneath the waning light  
 You'll never see me more in the long gray fields at night;  
 When from the dry dark wold the summer airs blow cool  
 On the oat-grass and the sword-grass, and the bulrush in the pool.

You'll bury me, my mother, just beneath the hawthorn shade,  
 And you'll come sometimes and see me where I am lowly laid.  
 I shall not forget you, mother, I shall hear you when you pass,  
 With your feet above my head in the long and pleasant grass.

I have been wild and wayward, but you'll forgive me now;  
 You'll kiss me, my own mother, and forgive me ere I go;  
 Nay, nay, you must not weep, nor let your grief be wild,  
 You should not fret for me, mother, you have another child.

If I can I'll come again, mother, from out my resting-place;  
 Tho' you'll not see me, mother, I shall look upon your face;  
 Tho' I cannot speak a word, I shall harken what you say,  
 And be often, often with you when you think I'm far away.

Goodnight, goodnight, when I have said goodnight for evermore,  
 And you see me carried out from the threshold of the door;  
 Don't let Effie come to see me till my grave be growing green:  
 She'll be a better child to you than ever I have been.

She'll find my garden-tools upon the granary floor:  
 Let her take 'em: they are hers: I shall never garden more:  
 But tell her, when I'm gone, to train the rosebush that I set  
 About the parlour-window and the box of mignonette.

Goodnight, sweet mother: call me before the day is born.  
 All night I lie awake, but I fall asleep at morn;  
 But I would see the sun rise upon the glad New-year,  
 So, if you're waking, call me, call me early, mother dear.

#### CONCLUSION.

I THOUGHT to pass away before, and yet alive I am;  
 And in the fields all round I hear the bleating of the lamb.  
 How sadly, I remember, rose the morning of the year!  
 To die before the snowdrop came, and now the violet's here.

O sweet is the new violet, that comes beneath the skies,  
 And sweeter is the young lamb's voice to me that cannot rise,  
 And sweet is all the land about, and all the flowers that blow,  
 And sweeter far is death than life to me that long to go.

It seem'd so hard at first, mother, to leave the blessed sun,  
 And now it seems as hard to stay, and yet His-will be done!  
 But still I think it can't be long before I find release;  
 And that good man, the clergyman, has told me words of peace.

O blessings on his kindly voice and on his silver hair!  
 And blessings on his whole life long, until he meet me there!  
 O blessings on his kindly heart and on his silver head!  
 A thousand times I blest him, as he knelt beside my bed.

He taught me all the mercy, for he show'd me all the sin.  
 Now, tho' my lamp was lighted late, there's One will let me in:  
 Nor would I now be well, mother, again if that could be,  
 For my desire is but to pass to Him that died for me.

I did not hear the dog howl, mother, or the death-watch beat,  
 There came a sweeter token when the night and morning meet:  
 But sit beside my bed, mother, and put your hand in mine,  
 And Effie on the other side, and I will tell the sign.

All in the wild March-morning I heard the angels call;  
 It was when the moon was setting, and the dark was over all;  
 The trees began to whisper, and the wind began to roll,  
 And in the wild March-morning I heard them call my soul.

For lying broad awake I thought of you and Effie dear;  
 I saw you sitting in the house and I no longer here;  
 With all my strength I pray'd for both, and so I felt resign'd,  
 And up the valley came a swell of music on the wind.

I thought that it was fancy, and I listen'd in my bed,  
 And then did something speak to me — I know not what was said;  
 For great delight and shuddering took hold of all my mind,  
 And up the valley came again the music on the wind.

But you were sleeping; and I said, 'It's not for them: it's mine.'  
 And if it come three times, I thought, I take it for a sign.  
 And once again it came, and close beside the window-bars,  
 Then seem'd to go right up to Heaven and die among the stars.

So now I think my time is near. I trust it is. I know  
 The blessed music went that way my soul will have to go.  
 And for myself, indeed, I care not if I go to-day.  
 But, Effie, you must comfort *her* when I am passed away.

And say to Robin a kind word, and tell him not to fret;  
 There's many a worthier than I, would make him happy yet.  
 If I had lived — I cannot tell — I might have been his wife;  
 But all these things have ceased to be, with my desire of life.

O look! the sun begins to rise, the heavens are in a glow;  
 He shines upon a hundred fields, and all of them I know.  
 And there I move no longer now, and there his light may shine —  
 Wild flowers in the valley for other hands than mine.

O sweet and strange it seems to me, that ere this day is done  
 The voice, that now is speaking, may be beyond the sun —  
 For ever and for ever with those just souls and true —  
 And what is life, that we should moan? why make we such ado?

For ever and for ever, all in a blessed home —  
 And there to wait a little while till you and Effie come —  
 To lie within the light of God, as I lie upon your breast —  
 And the wicked cease from troubling, and the weary are at rest.

## THE LOTOS-EATERS.

'COURAGE!' he said, and pointed toward  
the land,

'This mounting wave will roll us shore-  
ward soon.'

In the afternoon they came unto a land  
In which it seemed always afternoon.

All round the coast the languid air did  
swoon,

Breathing like one that hath a weary  
dream.

Full-faced above the valley stood the  
moon;

And like a downward smoke, the slender  
stream

Along the cliff to fall and pause and fall  
did seem.

A land of streams! some, like a down-  
ward smoke,

Slow-dropping veils of thinnest lawn, did  
go;

And some thro' wavering lights and  
shadows broke,

Rolling a slumbrous sheet of foam below.  
They saw the gleaming river seaward flow

From the inner land: far off, three moun-  
tain-tops,

Three silent pinnacles of aged snow,  
Stood sunset-flush'd: and, dew'd with

showery drops,  
Up-clomb the shadowy pine above the

woven copse.

The charmed sunset linger'd low adown  
In the red West: thro' mountain clefts  
the dale

Was seen far inland, and the yellow down  
Border'd with palm, and many a winding  
vale

And meadow, set with slender galingale;  
A land where all things always seem'd  
the same!

And round about the keel with faces  
pale,

Dark faces pale against that rosy flame,  
The mild-eyed melancholy Lotos-eaters  
came.

Branches they bore of that enchanted  
stem,

Laden with flower and fruit, whereof they  
gave

To each, but whoso did receive of them,  
And taste, to him the gushing of the wave  
Far far away did seem to mourn and rave  
On alien shores; and if his fellow spake,  
His voice was thin, as voices from the  
grave;

And deep-asleep he seem'd, yet all awake,  
And music in his ears his beating heart  
did make.

They sat them down upon the yellow  
sand,

Between the sun and moon upon the  
shore;

And sweet it was to dream of Fatherland,  
Of child, and wife, and slave; but ever-  
more

Most weary seem'd the sea, weary the  
oar,

Weary the wandering fields of barren  
foam.

Then some one said, 'We will return no  
more;'

And all at once they sang, 'Our island  
home

Is far beyond the wave; we will no longer  
room.'

## CHORIC SONG.

## I.

THERE is sweet music here that softer falls  
Than petals from blown roses on the grass,  
Or night-dews on still waters between  
walls

Of shadowy granite, in a gleaming pass;  
Music that gentlier on the spirit lies,  
Than tir'd eyelids upon tir'd eyes;  
Music that brings sweet sleep down from  
the blissful skies.

Here are cool mosses deep,  
And thro' the moss the ivies creep,  
And in the stream the long-leaved flowers  
weep,

And from the craggy ledge the poppy  
hangs in sleep.

## II.

Why are we weigh'd upon with heavi-  
ness,

And utterly consumed with sharp dis-  
tress,

While all things else have rest from  
weariness?

All things have rest: why should we  
toil alone,

We only toil, who are the first of things,  
And make perpetual moan,  
Still from one sorrow to another thrown:  
Nor ever fold our wings,  
And cease from wanderings,  
Nor steep our brows in slumber's holy  
balm;

Nor harken what the inner spirit sings,  
'There is no joy but calm!'

Why should we only toil, the roof and  
crown of things?

## III.

Lo! in the middle of the wood,  
The folded leaf is woo'd from out the  
bud

With winds upon the branch, and there  
Grows green and broad, and takes no  
care,

Sun-steep'd at noon, and in the moon  
Nightly dew-fed; and turning yellow  
Falls, and floats adown the air.

Lo! sweeten'd with the summer light,  
The full-juiced apple, waxing over-mel-  
low,

Drops in a silent autumn night.  
All its allotted length of days,  
The flower ripens in its place,  
Ripens and fades, and falls, and hath  
no toil,

Fast-rooted in the fruitful soil.

## IV.

Hateful is the dark-blue sky,  
Vaulted o'er the dark-blue sea.  
Death is the end of life; ah, why  
Should life all labour be?

Let us alone. Time driveth onward fast,  
And in a little while our lips are dumb.

Let us alone. What is it that will last?  
All things are taken from us, and become  
Portions and parcels of the dreadful Past.  
Let us alone. What pleasure can we  
have

To war with evil? Is there any peace  
In ever climbing up the climbing wave?  
All things have rest, and ripen toward  
the grave

In silence; ripen, fall and cease:  
Give us long rest or death, dark death,  
or dreamful ease.

## V.

How sweet it were, hearing the down-  
ward stream,

With half-shut eyes ever to seem  
Falling asleep in a half-dream!  
To dream and dream, like yonder amber  
light,

Which will not leave the myrrh-bush on  
the height;

To hear each other's whisper'd speech;  
Eating the Lotos day by day,  
To watch the crisping ripples on the  
beach,

And tender curving lines of creamy spray;  
To lend our hearts and spirits wholly  
To the influence of mild-minded melan-  
choly;

To muse and brood and live again in  
memory,

With those old faces of our infancy  
Heap'd over with a mound of grass,  
Two handfuls of white dust, shut in an  
urn of brass!

## VI.

Dear is the memory of our wedded lives,  
And dear the last embraces of our wives  
And their warm tears: but all hath suf-  
fer'd change:

For surely now our household hearths  
are cold:

Our sons inherit us: our looks are  
strange:

And we should come like ghosts to  
trouble joy.

Or else the island princes over-hold  
Have eat our substance, and the min-  
strel sings

Before them of the ten years' war in  
Troy,

And our great deeds, as half-forgotten  
things.

Is there confusion in the little isle?  
Let what is broken so remain.

The Gods are hard to reconcile:  
'Tis hard to settle order once again.

There is confusion worse than death,  
Trouble on trouble, pain on pain,  
Long labour unto aged breath,



Sore task to hearts worn out by many wars  
And eyes grown dim with gazing on  
the pilot-stars.

## VII.

But, propt on beds of amaranth and  
moly,  
How sweet (while warm airs lull us,  
blowing lowly)  
With half-dropt eyelid still,  
Beneath a heaven dark and holy,  
To watch the long bright river drawing  
slowly  
His waters from the purple hill—  
To hear the dewy echoes calling  
From cave to cave thro' the thick-twined  
vine—  
To watch the emerald-colour'd water  
falling  
Thro' many a wov'n acanthus-wreath  
divine!  
Only to hear and see the far-off spark-  
ling brine,  
Only to hear were sweet, stretch'd out  
beneath the pine.

## VIII.

The Lotos blooms below the barren peak :  
The Lotos blows by every winding creek :  
All day the wind breathes low with mel-  
lower tone :  
Thro' every hollow cave and alley lone  
Round and round the spicy downs the  
yellow Lotos-dust is blown.  
We have had enough of action, and of  
motion we,  
Roll'd to starboard, roll'd to larboard,  
when the surge was seething free,  
Where the wallowing monster spouted  
his foam-fountains in the sea.  
Let us swear an oath, and keep it with  
an equal mind,  
In the hollow Lotos-land to live and lie  
reclined  
On the hills like Gods together, careless  
of mankind.  
For they lie beside their nectar, and the  
bolts are hurl'd  
Far below them in the valleys, and the  
clouds are lightly curl'd  
Round their golden houses, girdled with  
the gleaming world :

Where they smile in secret, looking over  
wasted lands,  
Blight and famine, plague and earthquake,  
roaring deeps and fiery sands,  
Clanging fights, and flaming towns, and  
sinking ships, and praying hands.  
But they smile, they find a music centred  
in a doleful song  
Steaming up, a lamentation and an an-  
cient tale of wrong,  
Like a tale of little meaning tho' the  
words are strong;  
Chanted from an ill-used race of men  
that cleave the soil,  
Sow the seed, and reap the harvest with  
enduring toil,  
Storing yearly little dues of wheat, and  
wine and oil;  
Till they perish and they suffer—some,  
'tis whisper'd—down in hell  
Suffer endless anguish, others in Elysian  
valleys dwell,  
Resting weary limbs at last on beds of  
asphodel.  
Surely, surely, slumber is more sweet  
than toil, the shore  
Than labour in the deep mid-ocean,  
wind and wave and oar;  
Oh rest ye, brother mariners, we will  
not wander more.

## A DREAM OF FAIR WOMEN.

I READ, before my eyelids dropt their  
shade,  
'*The Legend of Good Women*,' long ago  
Sung by the morning star of song, who  
made  
His music heard below;  
Dan Chaucer, the first warbler, whose  
sweet breath  
Preluded those melodious bursts that fill  
The spacious times of great Elizabeth  
With sounds that echo still.  
And, for a while, the knowledge of his art  
Held me above the subject, as strong  
gales  
Hold swollen clouds from raining, tho'  
my heart,  
Brimful of those wild tales,

- Charged both mine eyes with tears. In every land  
I saw, wherever light illumineth,  
Beauty and anguish walking hand in hand  
The downward slope to death.
- Those far-renowned brides of ancient song  
Peopled the hollow dark, like burning stars,  
And I heard sounds of insult, shame, and wrong,  
And trumpets blown for wars;
- And clattering flints batter'd with clanging hoofs;  
And I saw crowds in column'd sanctuaries;  
And forms that pass'd at windows and on roofs  
Of marble palaces;
- Corpses across the threshold; heroes tall  
Dislodging pinnacle and parapet  
Upon the tortoise creeping to the wall;  
Lances in ambush set;
- And high shrine-doors burst thro' with heated blasts  
That run before the fluttering tongues of fire;  
White surf wind-scatter'd over sails and masts,  
And ever climbing higher;
- Squadrons and squares of men in brazen plates,  
Scaffolds, still sheets of water, divers woes,  
Ranges of glimmering vaults with iron grates,  
And hush'd seraglios.
- So shape chased shape as swift as, when to land  
Bluster the winds and tides the self-same way,  
Crisp foam-flakes scud along the level sand,  
Torn from the fringe of spray.
- I started once, or seem'd to start in pain,  
Resolved on noble things, and strove to speak,
- As when a great thought strikes along the brain,  
And flushes all the cheek.
- And once my arm was lifted to hew down  
A cavalier from off his saddle-bow,  
That bore a lady from a leaguer'd town;  
And then, I know not how,
- All those sharp fancies, by down-lapsing thought  
Stream'd onward, lost their edges, and did creep  
Roll'd on each other, rounded, smooth'd, and brought  
Into the gulfs of sleep.
- At last methought that I had wander'd far  
In an old wood: fresh-wash'd in coolest dew  
The maiden splendours of the morning star  
Shook in the stedfast blue.
- Enormous elm-tree-boles did stoop and lean  
Upon the dusky brushwood underneath  
Their broad curved branches, fledged with clearest green,  
New from its silken sheath.
- The dim red morn had died, her journey done,  
And with dead lips smiled at the twilight plain,  
Half-fall'n across the threshold of the sun,  
Never to rise again.
- There was no motion in the dumb dead air,  
Not any song of bird or sound of rill;  
Gross darkness of the inner sepulchre  
Is not so deadly still
- As that wide forest. Growths of jasmine turn'd  
Their humid arms festooning tree to tree,  
And at the root thro' lush green grasses burn'd  
The red anemone.
- I knew the flowers, I knew the leaves, I knew  
The tearful glimmer of the languid dawn

On those long, rank, dark wood-walks  
drench'd in dew,  
Leading from lawn to lawn.

The smell of violets, hidden in the green,  
Pour'd back into my empty soul and  
frame

The times when I remember to have been  
Joyful and free from blame.

And from within me a clear under-tone  
Thrill'd thro' mine ears in that unbliss-  
ful clime,

'Pass freely thro': the wood is all thine own,  
Until the end of time.'

At length I saw a lady within call,  
Still than chisell'd marble, standing  
there;

A daughter of the gods, divinely tall,  
And most divinely fair.

Her loveliness with shame and with sur-  
prise  
Froze my swift speech: she turning on  
my face

The star-like sorrows of immortal eyes,  
Spoke slowly in her place.

'I had great beauty: ask thou not my  
name:

No one can be more wise than destiny.  
Many drew swords and died. Where'er  
I came  
I brought calamity.'

'No marvel, sovereign lady: in fair field  
Myself for such a face had boldly died,'  
I answer'd free; and turning I appeal'd  
To one that stood beside.

But she, with sick and scornful looks averse,  
To her full height her stately stature  
draws;

'My youth,' she said, 'was blasted with  
a curse:

This woman was the cause.

'I was cut off from hope in that sad place,  
Which men call'd Aulis in those iron  
years:

My father held his hand upon his face;  
I, blinded with my tears,

'Still strove to speak: my voice was  
thick with sighs

As in a dream. Dimly I could descry  
The stern black-bearded kings with wolf-  
ish eyes,

Waiting to see me die.

'The high masts flicker'd as they lay  
afloat;

The crowds, the temples, waver'd, and  
the shore;

The bright death quiver'd at the victim's  
throat;

Touch'd; and I knew no more.'

Whereto the other with a downward  
brow:

'I would the white cold heavy-plung-  
ing foam,

Whirl'd by the wind, had roll'd me deep  
below,

Then when I left my home.'

Her slow full words sank thro' the silence  
drear,

As thunder-drops fall on a sleeping  
sea:

Sudden I heard a voice that cried, 'Come  
here,

That I may look on thee.'

I turning saw, throned on a flowery rise,  
One sitting on a crimson scarf unroll'd;

A queen, with swarthy cheeks and bold  
black eyes,

Brow-bound with burning gold.

She, flashing forth a haughty smile, began:

'I govern'd men by change, and so I  
sway'd

All moods. 'Tis long since I have seen  
a man.

Once, like the moon, I made

'The ever-shifting currents of the blood  
According to my humour ebb and flow.

I have no men to govern in this wood:  
That makes my only woe.

'Nay — yet it chafes me that I could not  
bend

One will; nor tame and tutor with  
mine eye

That dull cold-blooded Cæsar. Prythee,  
friend,  
Where is Mark Antony?

'The man, my lover, with whom I rode  
sublime  
On Fortune's neck: we sat as God by  
God:  
The Nilus would have risen before his  
time  
And flooded at our nod.

'We drank the Libyan Sun to sleep, and  
lit  
Lamps which out-burn'd Canopus. O  
my life  
In Egypt! O the dalliance and the wit,  
The flattery and the strife,

'And the wild kiss, when fresh from war's  
alarms,  
My Hercules, my Roman Antony,  
My mailed Bacchus leapt into my arms,  
Contented there to die!

'And there he died: and when I heard  
my name  
Sigh'd forth with life I would not  
brook my fear  
Of the other: with a worm I balk'd his  
fame.  
What else was left? look here!'

(With that she tore her robe apart, and  
half  
The polish'd argent of her breast to  
sight  
Laid bare. Thereto she pointed with a  
laugh,  
Showing the aspick's bite.)

'I died a Queen. The Roman soldier  
found  
Me lying dead, my crown about my  
brows,  
A name for ever!—lying robed and  
crown'd,  
Worthy a Roman spouse.'

Her warbling voice, a lyre of widest  
range  
Struck by all passion, did fall down  
and glance

From tone to tone, and glided thro' all  
change  
Of liveliest utterance.

When she made pause I knew not for  
delight;  
Because with sudden motion from the  
ground  
She raised her piercing orbs, and fill'd  
with light  
The interval of sound.

Still with their fires Love tipt his keenest  
darts;  
As once they drew into two burning  
rings  
All beams of Love, melting the mighty  
hearts  
Of captains and of kings.

Slowly my sense undazzled. Then I  
heard  
A noise of some one coming thro' the  
lawn,  
And singing clearer than the crested  
bird  
That claps his wings at dawn.

'The torrent brooks of hallow'd Israel  
From craggy hollows pouring, late and  
soon,  
Sound all night long, in falling thro' the  
dell,  
Far-heard beneath the moon.

'The balmy moon of blessed Israel  
Floods all the deep-blue gloom with  
beams divine:  
All night the splinter'd crags that wall  
the dell  
With spires of silver shine.'

As one that museth where broad sunshine  
laves  
The lawn by some cathedral, thro' the  
door  
Hearing the holy organ rolling waves  
Of sound on roof and floor

Within, and anthem sung, is charm'd and  
tied  
To where he stands,—so stood I,  
when that flow

Of music left the lips of her that died  
To save her father's vow;

The daughter of the warrior Gileadite,  
A maiden pure; as when she went  
along  
From Mizpeh's tower'd gate with wel-  
come light,  
With timbrel and with song.

My words leapt forth: 'Heaven heads  
the count of crimes  
With that wild oath.' She render'd  
answer high:  
'Not so, nor once alone; a thousand  
times  
I would be born and die.

'Single I grew, like some green plant,  
whose root  
Creeps to the garden water-pipes be-  
neath,  
Feeding the flower; but ere my flower to  
fruit  
Changed, I was ripe for death.

'My God, my land, my father — these  
did move  
Me from my bliss of life, that Nature  
gave,  
Lower'd softly with a threefold cord of  
love  
Down to a silent grave.

'And I went mourning, "No fair Hebrew  
boy  
Shall smile away my maiden blame  
among  
The Hebrew mothers" — emptied of all  
joy,  
Leaving the dance and song,

'Leaving the olive-gardens far below,  
Leaving the promise of my bridal  
bower,  
The valleys of grape-loaded vines that  
glow  
Beneath the battled tower.

'The light white cloud swam over us.  
Anon  
We heard the lion roaring from his  
den;

We saw the large white stars rise one by  
one,  
Or, from the darken'd glen,

'Saw God divide the night with flying  
flame,  
And thunder on the everlasting hills.  
I heard Him, for He spake, and grief  
became  
A solemn scorn of ills.

'When the next moon was roll'd into  
the sky,  
Strength came to me that equall'd my  
desire.  
How beautiful a thing it was to die  
For God and for my sire!

'It comforts me in this one thought to  
dwell,  
That I subdued me to my father's  
will;  
Because the kiss he gave me, ere I fell,  
Sweetens the spirit still.

'Moreover it is written that my race  
Hew'd Ammon, hip and thigh, from  
Aroer  
On Arnon unto Minneth.' Here her  
face  
Glow'd, as I look'd at her.

She lock'd her lips: she left me where I  
stood:  
'Glory to God,' she sang, and past  
afar,  
Thridding the sombre boskage of the  
wood,  
Toward the morning-star.

Losing her carol I stood pensively,  
As one that from a casement leans his  
head,  
When midnight bells cease ringing sud-  
denly,  
And the old year is dead.

'Alas! alas!' a low voice, full of care,  
Murmur'd beside me: 'Turn and look  
on me:  
I am that Rosamond, whom men call  
fair,  
If what I was I be.

'Would I had been some maiden coarse  
and poor!

O me, that I should ever see the light!  
Those dragon eyes of anger'd Eleanor  
Do hunt me, day and night.'

She ceased in tears, fallen from hope and  
trust:

To whom the Egyptian: 'Oh, you  
tamely died!

You should have clung to Fulvia's waist,  
and thrust

The dagger thro' her side.'

With that sharp sound the white dawn's  
creeping beams,

Stol'n to my brain, dissolved the mystery  
Of folded sleep. The captain of my  
dreams

Ruled in the eastern sky.

Morn broaden'd on the borders of the dark,  
Ere I saw her, who clasp'd in her last  
trance

Her murder'd father's head, or Joan of  
Arc,

A light of ancient France;

Or her who knew that Love can vanquish  
Death,

Who kneeling, with one arm about  
her king,

Drew forth the poison with her balmy  
breath,

Sweet as new buds in Spring.

No memory labours longer from the deep  
Gold-mines of thought to lift the  
hidden ore

That glimpses, moving up, than I from  
sleep

To gather and tell o'er

Each little sound and sight. With what  
dull pain

Compass'd, how eagerly I sought to  
strike

Into that wondrous track of dreams  
again!

But no two dreams are like.

As when a soul laments, which hath been  
blest,

Desiring what is mingled with past  
years,

In yearnings that can never be exprest  
By sighs or groans or tears;

Because all words, tho' cull'd with choicest  
art,

Failing to give the bitter of the sweet,  
Wither beneath the palate, and the heart  
Faints, faded by its heat.

### THE BLACKBIRD.

O BLACKBIRD! sing me something well:  
While all the neighbours shoot thee  
round,

I keep smooth plats of fruitful ground,  
Where thou may'st warble, eat and dwell.

The espaliers and the standards all  
Are thine; the range of lawn and  
park:

The unnetted black-hearts ripen dark,  
All thine, against the garden wall.

Yet, tho' I spared thee all the spring,  
Thy sole delight is, sitting still,  
With that gold dagger of thy bill  
To fret the summer jenneting.

A golden bill! the silver tongue,  
Cold February loved, is dry:  
Plenty corrupts the melody  
That made thee famous once, when  
young:

And in the sultry garden-squares,  
Now thy flute-notes are changed to  
coarse,

I hear thee not at all, or hoarse  
As when a hawkker hawks his wares.

Take warning! he that will not sing  
While yon sun prospers in the blue,  
Shall sing for want, ere leaves are new,  
Caught in the frozen palms of Spring.

### THE DEATH OF THE OLD YEAR.

FULL knee-deep lies the winter snow,  
And the winter winds are wearily sigh-  
ing:



Toll ye the church-bell sad and slow  
And tread softly and speak low,  
For the old year lies a-dying.

Old year, you must not die;  
You came to us so readily,  
You lived with us so steadily,  
Old year, you shall not die.

He lieth still : he doth not move :  
He will not see the dawn of day.  
He hath no other life above.  
He gave me a friend, and a true true-love,  
And the New-year will take 'em away.

Old year, you must not go;  
So long as you have been with us,  
Such joy as you have seen with us,  
Old year, you shall not go.

He froth'd his bumpers to the brim;  
A jollier year we shall not see.  
But tho' his eyes are waxing dim,  
And tho' his foes speak ill of him,  
He was a friend to me.

Old year, you shall not die;  
We did so laugh and cry with you,  
I've half a mind to die with you,  
Old year, if you must die.

He was full of joke and jest,  
But all his merry quips are o'er.  
To see him die, across the waste  
His son and heir doth ride post-haste,  
But he'll be dead before.

Every one for his own.  
The night is starry and cold, my  
friend,  
And the New-year blithe and bold,  
my friend,  
Comes up to take his own.

How hard he breathes! over the snow  
I heard just now the crowing cock.  
The shadows flicker to and fro:  
The cricket chirps: the light burns low:  
'Tis nearly twelve o'clock.

Shake hands, before you die.  
Old year, we'll dearly rue for you:  
What is it we can do for you?  
Speak out before you die.

His face is growing sharp and thin.  
Alack! our friend is gone.  
Close up his eyes: tie up his chin:

Step from the corpse, and let him in  
That standeth there alone,  
And waiteth at the door.  
There's a new foot on the floor, my  
friend,  
And a new face at the door, my  
friend,  
A new face at the door.

### TO J. S.

THE wind, that beats the mountain, blows  
More softly round the open wold,  
And gently comes the world to those  
That are cast in gentle mould.

And me this knowledge bolder made,  
Or else I had not dared to flow  
In these words toward you, and invade  
Even with a verse your holy woe.

'Tis strange that those we lean on most,  
Those in whose laps our limbs are  
nursed,  
Fall into shadow, soonest lost:  
Those we love first are taken first.

God gives us love. Something to love  
He lends us; but, when love is grown  
To ripeness, that on which it throve  
Falls off, and love is left alone.

This is the curse of time. Alas!  
In grief I am not all unlearn'd;  
Once thro' mine own doors Death did pass;  
One went, who never hath return'd.

He will not smile— not speak to me  
Once more. Two years his chair is  
seen  
Empty before us. That was he  
Without whose life I had not been.

Your loss is rarer; for this star  
Rose with you thro' a little arc  
Of heaven, nor having wander'd far  
Shot on the sudden into dark.

I knew your brother: his mute dust  
I honour and his living worth:  
A man more pure and bold and just  
Was never born into the earth.

I have not look'd upon you nigh,  
 Since that dear soul hath fall'n asleep.  
 Great Nature is more wise than I:  
 I will not tell you not to weep.

And tho' mine own eyes fill with dew,  
 Drawn from the spirit thro' the brain,  
 I will not even preach to you,  
 'Weep, weeping dulls the inward  
 pain.'

Let Grief be her own mistress still.  
 She loveth her own anguish deep  
 More than much pleasure. Let her will  
 Be done — to weep or not to weep.

I will not say, 'God's ordinance  
 Of Death is blown in every wind;'  
 For that is not a common chance  
 That takes away a noble mind.

His memory long will live alone  
 In all our hearts, as mournful light  
 That broods above the fallen sun,  
 And dwells in heaven half the night.

Vain solace! Memory standing near  
 Cast down her eyes, and in her  
 throat  
 Her voice seem'd distant, and a tear  
 Dropt on the letters as I wrote.

I wrote I know not what. In truth,  
 How *should* I soothe you anyway,  
 Who miss the brother of your youth?  
 Yet something I did wish to say:

For he too was a friend to me:  
 Both are my friends, and my true  
 breast  
 Bleedeth for both; yet it may be  
 That only silence suiteth best.

Words weaker than your grief would  
 make  
 Grief more. 'Twere better I should  
 cease  
 Although myself could almost take  
 The place of him that sleeps in  
 peace.

Sleep sweetly, tender heart, in peace:  
 Sleep, holy spirit, blessed soul,

While the stars burn, the moons increase,  
 And the great ages onward roll.

Sleep till the end, true soul and sweet.  
 Nothing comes to thee new or strange.  
 Sleep full of rest from head to feet;  
 Lie still, dry dust, secure of change.

### ON A MOURNER.

#### I.

NATURE, so far as in her lies,  
 Imitates God, and turns her face  
 To every land beneath the skies,  
 Counts nothing that she meets with  
 base,  
 But lives and loves in every place;

#### II.

Fills out the homely quickset-screens,  
 And makes the purple lilac ripe,  
 Steps from her airy hill, and greens  
 The swamp, where humm'd the drop-  
 ping snipe,  
 With moss and braided marish-pipe;

#### III.

And on thy heart a finger lays,  
 Saying, 'Beat quicker, for the time  
 Is pleasant, and the woods and ways  
 Are pleasant, and the beech and lime  
 Put forth and feel a gladder clime.'

#### IV.

And murmurs of a deeper voice,  
 Going before to some far shrine,  
 Teach that sick heart the stronger choice,  
 Till all thy life one way incline  
 With one wide Will that closes thine.

#### V.

And when the zoning eve has died  
 Where yon dark valleys wind forlorn,  
 Come Hope and Memory, spouse and  
 bride,  
 From out the borders of the morn,  
 With that fair child betwixt them born.

#### VI.

And when no mortal motion jars  
 The blackness round the tombing sod,

Thro' silence and the trembling stars  
Comes Faith from tracts no feet have  
trod,  
And Virtue, like a household god

## VII.

Promising empire; such as those  
Once heard at dead of night to greet  
Troy's wandering prince, so that he rose  
With sacrifice, while all the fleet  
Had rest by stony hills of Crete.

YOU ask me, why, tho' ill at ease,  
Within this region I subsist,  
Whose spirits falter in the mist,  
And languish for the purple seas.

It is the land that freemen till,  
That sober-suited Freedom chose,  
The land, where girt with friends or  
foes  
A man may speak the thing he will;

A land of settled government,  
A land of just and old renown,  
Where Freedom slowly broadens  
down  
From precedent to precedent :

Where faction seldom gathers head,  
But by degrees to fullness wrought,  
The strength of some diffusive  
thought  
Hath time and space to work and spread.

Should banded unions persecute  
Opinion, and induce a time  
When single thought is civil crime,  
And individual freedom mute;

Tho' Power should make from land to  
land  
The name of Britain trebly great —  
Tho' every channel of the State  
Should fill and choke with golden sand —

Yet waft me from the harbour-mouth,  
Wild wind! I seek a warmer sky,  
And I will see before I die  
The palms and temples of the South.

Of old sat Freedom on the heights,  
The thunders breaking at her feet:  
Above her shook the starry lights:  
She heard the torrents meet.

There in her place she did rejoice,  
Self-gather'd in her prophet-mind,  
But fragments of her mighty voice  
Came rolling on the wind.

Then stept she down thro' town and  
field  
To mingle with the human race,  
And part by part to men reveal'd  
The fullness of her face —

Grave mother of majestic works,  
From her isle-altar gazing down,  
Who, God-like, grasps the triple forks,  
And, King-like, wears the crown:

Her open eyes desire the truth.  
The wisdom of a thousand years  
Is in them. May perpetual youth  
Keep dry their light from tears;

That her fair form may stand and shine,  
Make bright our days and light our  
dreams,  
Turning to scorn with lips divine  
The falsehood of extremes!

LOVE thou thy land, with love far-brought  
From out the storied Past, and used  
Within the Present, but transfused  
Thro' future time by power of thought.

True love turn'd round on fixed poles,  
Love, that endures not sordid ends,  
For English natures, freemen, friends,  
Thy brothers and immortal souls.

But pamper not a hasty time,  
Nor feed with crude imaginings  
The herd, wild hearts and feeble wings  
That every sophister can lime.

Deliver not the tasks of might  
To weakness, neither hide the ray  
From those, not blind, who wait for  
day,  
Tho' sitting girt with doubtful light.

Make knowledge circle with the winds;  
 But let her herald, Reverence, fly  
 Before her to whatever sky  
 Bear seed of men and growth of minds.

Watch what main-currents draw the  
 years:  
 Cut Prejudice against the grain:  
 But gentle words are always gain:  
 Regard the weakness of thy peers:

Nor toil for title, place, or touch  
 Of pension, neither count on praise:  
 It grows to guerdon after-days:  
 Nor deal in watch-words overmuch:

Not clinging to some ancient saw;  
 Not master'd by some modern term;  
 Not swift nor slow to change, but  
 firm:  
 And in its season bring the law;

That from Discussion's lip may fall  
 With Life, that, working strongly,  
 binds —  
 Set in all lights by many minds,  
 To close the interests of all.

For Nature also, cold and warm,  
 And moist and dry, devising long,  
 Thro' many agents making strong,  
 Matures the individual form.

Meet is it changes should control  
 Our being, lest we rust in ease.  
 We all are changed by still degrees,  
 All but the basis of the soul.

So let the change which comes be free  
 To ingroove itself with that which  
 flies,  
 And work, a joint of state, that plies  
 Its office, moved with sympathy.

A saying, hard to shape in act;  
 For all the past of Time reveals  
 A bridal dawn of thunder-peals,  
 Wherever Thought hath wedded Fact.

Ev'n now we hear with inward strife  
 A motion toiling in the gloom —  
 The Spirit of the years to come  
 Yearning to mix himself with Life.

A slow-develop'd strength awaits  
 Completion in a painful school;  
 Phantoms of other forms of rule,  
 New Majesties of mighty States —

The warders of the growing hour,  
 But vague in vapour, hard to mark;  
 And round them sea and air are dark  
 With great contrivances of Power.

Of many changes, aptly join'd,  
 Is bodied forth the second whole.  
 Regard gradation, lest the soul  
 Of Discord race the rising wind;

A wind to puff your idol-fires,  
 And heap their ashes on the head;  
 To shame the boast so often made,  
 That we are wiser than our sires.

Oh yet, if Nature's evil star  
 Drive men in manhood, as in youth,  
 To follow flying steps of Truth  
 Across the brazen bridge of war —

If New and Old, disastrous feud,  
 Must ever shock, like armed foes,  
 And this be true, till Time shall close,  
 That Principles are rain'd in blood;

Not yet the wise of heart would cease  
 To hold his hope thro' shame and  
 guilt,  
 But with his hand against the hilt,  
 Would pace the troubled land, like  
 Peace;

Not less, tho' dogs of Faction bay,  
 Would serve his kind in deed and  
 word,  
 Certain, if knowledge bring the sword  
 That knowledge takes the sword away —

Would love the gleams of good that  
 broke  
 From either side, nor veil his eyes:  
 And if some dreadful need should rise  
 Would strike, and firmly, and one stroke:

To-morrow yet would reap to-day,  
 As we bear blossom of the dead:  
 Earn well the thrifty months, nor wed  
 Raw Haste, half-sister to Decay.

ENGLAND AND AMERICA  
IN 1782.

O THOU, that sendest out the man  
To rule by land and sea,  
Strong mother of a Lion-line,  
Be proud of those strong sons of thine  
Who wrench'd their rights from thee!

What wonder, if in noble heat  
Those men thine arms withstood,  
Retought the lesson thou hadst taught,  
And in thy spirit with thee fought—  
Who sprang from English blood!

But Thou rejoice with liberal joy,  
Lift up thy rocky face,  
And shatter, when the storms are black,  
In many a streaming torrent back,  
The seas that shock thy base!

Whatever harmonies of law  
The growing world assume,  
Thy work is thine—The single note  
From that deep chord which Hampden  
smote  
Will vibrate to the doom.

THE GOOSE.

I KNEW an old wife lean and poor,  
Her rags scarce held together;  
There strode a stranger to the door,  
And it was windy weather.

He held a goose upon his arm,  
He utter'd rhyme and reason,  
'Here, take the goose, and keep you  
warm,  
It is a stormy season.'

She caught the white goose by the leg,  
A goose—'twas no great matter.  
The goose let fall a golden egg  
With cackle and with clatter.

She dropt the goose, and caught the  
pelf,  
And ran to tell her neighbours;  
And bless'd herself, and cursed herself,  
And rested from her labours.

And feeding high, and living soft,  
Grew plump and able-bodied;  
Until the grave churchwarden doff'd,  
The parson smirk'd and nodded.

So sitting, served by man and maid,  
'She felt her heart grow prouder:  
But ah! the more the white goose laid  
It clack'd and cackled louder.

It clutter'd here, it chuckled there;  
It stirr'd the old wife's mettle:  
She shifted in her elbow-chair,  
And hurl'd the pan and kettle.

'A quinsy choke thy cursed note!  
Then wax'd her anger stronger.  
'Go, take the goose, and wring her  
throat,  
I will not bear it longer.'

Then yelp'd the cur, and yawl'd the  
cat;  
Ran Gaffer, stumbled Gammer.  
The goose flew this way and flew that,  
And fill'd the house with clamour.

As head and heels upon the floor  
They flounder'd all together,  
There strode a stranger to the door,  
And it was windy weather:

He took the goose upon his arm,  
He utter'd words of scorning:  
'So keep you cold, or keep you warm,  
It is a stormy morning.'

The wild wind rang from park and plain,  
And round the attics rumbled,  
Till all the tables danced again,  
And half the chimneys tumbled.

The glass blew in, the fire blew out,  
The blast was hard and harder.  
Her cap blew off, her gown blew up,  
And a whirlwind clear'd the larder:

And while on all sides breaking loose  
Her household fled the danger,  
Quoth she, 'The Devil take the goose,  
And God forget the stranger!'

## ENGLISH IDYLS

## AND OTHER POEMS.

## THE EPIC.

AT Francis Allen's on the Christmas-  
eve, —

The game of forfeits done — the girls all  
kiss'd

Beneath the sacred bush and past away —  
The parson Holmes, the poet Everard  
Hall,

The host, and I sat round the wassail-  
bowl,

Then half-way ebb'd: and there we held  
a talk,

How all the old honour had from Christ-  
mas gone,

Or gone, or dwindled down to some odd  
games

In some odd nooks like this; till I, tired  
out

With cutting eights that day upon the  
pond,

Where, three times slipping from the  
outer edge,

I bump'd the ice into three several stars,  
Fell in a doze; and half-awake I heard

The parson taking wide and wider  
sweeps,

Now harping on the church-commis-  
sioners,

Now hawking at Geology and schism;  
Until I woke, and found him settled down

Upon the general decay of faith  
Right thro' the world, 'at home was little

left,  
And none abroad: there was no anchor,  
none,

To hold by.' Francis, laughing, clapt  
his hand

On Everard's shoulder, with 'I hold by  
him.'

'And I,' quoth Everard, 'by the wassail-  
bowl.'

'Why yes,' I said, 'we knew your gift  
that way

At college: but another which you had,  
I mean of verse (for so we held it then),

What came of that?' 'You know,' said  
Frank, 'he burnt

His epic, his King Arthur, some twelve  
books' —

And then to me demanding why? 'Oh,  
sir,

He thought that nothing new was said,  
or else

Something so said 'twas nothing — that a  
truth

Looks freshest in the fashion of the  
day:

God knows: he has a mint of reasons:  
ask.

It pleased *me* well enough.' 'Nay, nay,'  
said Hall,

'Why take the style of those heroic  
times?

For nature brings not back the Masto-  
don,

Nor we those times; and why should any  
man

Remodel models? these twelve books of  
mine

Were faint Homeric echoes, nothing-  
worth,

Mere chaff and druff, much better burnt.'  
'But I,'

Said Francis, 'pick'd the eleventh from  
this hearth

And have it: keep a thing, its use will  
come.

I hoard it as a sugar-plum for Holmes.'  
He laugh'd, and I, tho' sleepy, like a

horse  
That hears the corn-bin open, prick'd  
my ears;

For I remember'd Everard's college fame  
When we were Freshmen: then at my

request  
He brought it; and the poet little

urged,  
But with some prelude of disparagement,  
Read, mouthing out his hollow oes and

aes,  
Deep-chested music, and to this result.



## MORTE D'ARTHUR.

So all day long the noise of battle roll'd  
Among the mountains by the winter sea;  
Until King Arthur's table, man by man,  
Had fallen in Lyonesse about their Lord,  
King Arthur: then, because his wound

was deep,  
The bold Sir Bedivere uplifted him,  
Sir Bedivere, the last of all his knights,  
And bore him to a chapel nigh the field,  
A broken chancel with a broken cross,  
That stood on a dark strait of barren land.  
On one side lay the Ocean, and on one  
Lay a great water, and the moon was  
full.

Then spake King Arthur to Sir  
Bedivere:

'The sequel of to-day unsolders all  
The goodliest fellowship of famous  
knights

Whereof this world holds record. Such  
a sleep

They sleep — the men I loved. I think  
that we

Shall never more, at any future time,  
Delight our souls with talk of knightly  
deeds,

Walking about the gardens and the halls  
Of Camelot, as in the days that were.

I perish by this people which I made, —  
Tho' Merlin sware that I should come  
again

To rule once more — but let what will be,  
be,

I am so deeply smitten thro' the helm  
That without help I cannot last till morn.

Thou therefore take my brand Excalibur,  
Which was my pride: for thou remem-  
berest how

In those old days, one summer noon, an  
arm

Rose up from out the bosom of the lake,  
Clothed in white samite, mystic, wonder-  
ful,

Holding the sword — and how I row'd  
across

And took it, and have worn it, like a  
king:

And, wheresoever I am sung or told  
In aftertime, this also shall be known:  
But now delay not: take Excalibur,

And fling him far into the middle mere:  
Watch what thou seest, and lightly bring  
me word.'

To him replied the bold Sir Bedivere:  
'It is not meet, Sir King, to leave thee  
thus,

Aidless, alone, and smitten thro' the helm.  
A little thing may harm a wounded man.  
Yet I thy hest will all perform at full,  
Watch what I see, and lightly bring thee  
word.'

So saying, from the ruin'd shrine he  
stept

And in the moon athwart the place of  
tombs,

Where lay the mighty bones of ancient  
men,

Old knights, and over them the sea-wind  
sang

Shrill, chill, with flakes of foam. He,  
stepping down

By zig-zag paths, and juts of pointed  
rock,

Came on the shining levels of the lake.  
There drew he forth the brand

Excalibur,  
And o'er him, drawing it, the winter  
moon,

Brightening the skirts of a long cloud,  
ran forth

And sparkled keen with frost against the  
hilt:

For all the haft twinkled with diamond  
sparks,

Myriads of topaz-lights, and jacinth-work  
Of subtlest jewellery. He gazed so long

That both his eyes were dazzled, as he  
stood,

This way and that dividing the swift  
mind,

In act to throw: but at the last it seem'd  
Better to leave Excalibur conceal'd

There in the many-knotted waterflags,  
That whistled stiff and dry about the  
marge.

So strode he back slow to the wounded  
King.

Then spake King Arthur to Sir Bedi-  
vere:

'Hast thou perform'd my mission which  
I gave?

What is it thou hast seen? or what hast  
heard?'

And answer made the bold Sir Bedivere:

'I heard the ripple washing in the reeds,  
And the wild water lapping on the crag.'

To whom replied King Arthur, faint  
and pale:

'Thou hast betray'd thy nature and thy  
name,

Not rendering true answer, as besem'd  
Thy fæalty, nor like a noble knight:

For surer sign had follow'd, either hand,  
Or voice, or else a motion of the mere.

This is a shameful thing for men to lie.  
Yet now, I charge thee, quickly go again

As thou art lief and dear, and do the  
thing

I bade thee, watch, and lightly bring me  
word.'

Then went Sir Bedivere the second  
time

Across the ridge, and paced beside the  
mere,

Counting the dewy pebbles, fix'd in  
thought;

But when he saw the wonder of the hilt,  
How curiously and strangely chased, he  
snot

His palms together, and he cried aloud,  
'And if indeed I cast the brand away,

Surely a precious thing, one worthy note,  
Should thus be lost for ever from the earth,

Which might have pleased the eyes of  
many men.

What good should follow this, if this  
were done?

What harm, undone? deep harm to dis-  
obey,

Seeing obedience is the bond of rule.  
Were it well to obey, then, if a king de-  
mand

An act unprofitable, against himself?  
The King is sick, and knows not what he  
does.

What record, or what relic of my lord  
Should be to aftertime, but empty breath  
And rumours of a doubt? but were this  
kept,

Stored in some treasure-house of mighty  
kings,

Some one might show it at a joust of arms,  
Saying, "King Arthur's sword, Excalibur,

Wrought by the lonely maiden of the  
Lake.

Nine years she wrought it, sitting in the  
deeps

Upon the hidden bases of the hills."'  
So might some old man speak in the  
aftertime

To all the people, winning reverence.  
But now much honour and much fame  
were lost.'

So spake he, clouded with his own  
conceit,

And hid Excalibur the second time,  
And so strode back slow to the wounded  
King.

Then spoke King Arthur, breathing  
heavily:

'What is it thou hast seen? or what hast  
heard?'

And answer made the bold Sir Bedi-  
vere:

'I heard the water lapping on the crag,  
And the long ripple washing in the  
reeds.'

To whom replied King Arthur, much  
in wrath:

'Ah, miserable and unkind, untrue,  
Unknightly, traitor-hearted! Woe is me!  
Authority forgets a dying king,  
Laid widow'd of the power in his eye  
That bow'd the will. I see thee what  
thou art,

For thou, the latest-left of all my knights,  
In whom should meet the offices of all,  
Thou wouldst betray me for the precious  
hilt;

Either from lust of gold, or like a girl  
Valuing the giddy pleasure of the eyes.  
Yet, for a man may fail in duty twice,  
And the third time may prosper, get thee  
hence:

But, if thou spare to fling Excalibur,  
I will arise and slay thee with my hands.'

Then quickly rose Sir Bedivere, and  
ran,

And, leaping down the ridges lightly,  
plunged

Among the bulrush-beds, and clutch'd  
the sword,

And strongly wheel'd and threw it. The  
great brand

Made lightnings in the splendour of the  
moon,

And flashing round and round, and whirl'd  
in an arch,

Shot like a streamer of the northern morn,  
Seen where the moving isles of winter  
shock

By night, with noises of the northern sea.  
So flash'd and fell the brand Excalibur:  
But ere he dipt the surface, rose an arm  
Clothed in white samite, mystic, wonder-  
ful,

And caught him by the hilt, and brandish'd him

Three times, and drew him under in the mere.

And lightly went the other to the King.

Then spoke King Arthur, drawing  
thicker breath:

'Now see I by thine eyes that this is done.

Speak out: what is it thou hast heard, or seen?'

And answer made the bold Sir Bedivere:

'Sir King, I closed mine eyelids, lest the gems

Should blind my purpose, for I never saw,  
Nor shall see, here or elsewhere, till I die,  
Not tho' I live three lives of mortal men,  
So great a miracle as yonder hilt.

Then with both hands I flung him, wheeling him;

But when I look'd again, behold an arm,  
Clothed in white samite, mystic, wonderful,

That caught him by the hilt, and brandish'd him

Three times, and drew him under in the mere.'

And answer made King Arthur, breathing hard:

'My end draws nigh; 'tis time that I were gone.

Make broad thy shoulders to receive my weight,

And bear me to the margin; yet I fear  
My wound hath taken cold, and I shall die.'

So saying, from the pavement he half rose,

Slowly, with pain, reclining on his arm,  
And looking wistfully with wide blue eyes  
As in a picture. Him Sir Bevidere  
Remorsefully regarded thro' his tears,  
And would have spoken, but he found  
not words;

Then took with care, and kneeling on one knee,

O'er both his shoulders drew the languid hands,

And rising bore him thro' the place of tombs.

But, as he walk'd, King Arthur panted hard,

Like one that feels a nightmare on his bed  
When all the house is mute. So sigh'd the King,

Muttering and murmuring at his ear,

'Quick, quick!

I fear it is too late, and I shall die.'

But the other swiftly strode from ridge to ridge,

Clothed with his breath, and looking, as he walk'd,

Larger than human on the frozen hills.

He heard the deep behind him, and a cry  
Before. His own thought drove him,

like a goad.

Dry clash'd his harness in the icy caves  
And barren chasms, and all to left and right

The bare black cliff clang'd round him,  
as he based

His feet on juts of slippery crag that rang

Sharp-smitten with the dint of armed heels—

And on a sudden, lo! the level lake,  
And the long glories of the winter moon.

Then saw they how there hove a dusky barge,

Dark as a funeral scarf from stem to stern,  
Beneath them; and descending they were ware

That all the decks were dense with stately forms

Black-stoled, black-hooded, like a dream—  
—by these

Three Queens with crowns of gold—  
and from them rose

A cry that shiver'd to the tingling stars,  
And, as it were one voice an agony

Of lamentation, like a wind, that shrills  
All night in a waste land, where no one comes,

Or hath come, since the making of the world.

Then murmur'd Arthur, 'Place me in the barge,'

And to the barge they came. There  
those three Queens  
Put forth their hands, and took the King,  
and wept.

But she, that rose the tallest of them all  
And fairest, laid his head upon her lap,  
And loosed the shatter'd casque, and  
chafed his hands,

And call'd him by his name, complaining  
loud,

And dropping bitter tears against his brow  
Striped with dark blood: for all his face  
was white

And colourless, and like the wither'd  
moon

Smote by the fresh beam of the springing  
east;

And all his greaves and cuisses dash'd  
with drops

Of onset; and the light and lustrous  
curls —

That made his forehead like a rising sun  
High from the dais-throne — were  
parch'd with dust;

Or, clotted into points and hanging loose,  
Mix'd with the knightly growth that  
fringed his lips.

So like a shatter'd column lay the King;  
Not like that Arthur who, with lance in  
rest,

From spur to plume a star of tournament,  
Shot thro' the lists at Camelot, and charged  
Before the eyes of ladies and of kings.

Then loudly cried the bold Sir Bedivere,  
'Ah! my Lord Arthur, whither shall I  
go?

Where shall I hide my forehead and my  
eyes?

For now I see the true old times are  
dead,

When every morning brought a noble  
chance,

And every chance brought out a noble  
knight.

Such times have been not since the light  
that led

The holy Elders with the gift of myrrh.

But now the whole ROUND TABLE is

dissolved

Which was an image of the mighty world;  
And I, the last, go forth companionless,

And the days darken round me, and the  
years,

Among new men, strange faces, other  
minds.'

And slowly answered Arthur from the  
barge:

'The old order changeth, yielding place  
to new,

And God fulfils Himself in many ways,  
Lest one good custom should corrupt the  
world.

Comfort thyself: what comfort is in me?  
I have lived my life, and that which I  
have done

May He within Himself make pure! but  
thou,

If thou shouldst never see my face again,  
Pray for my soul. More things are

wrought by prayer  
Than this world dreams of. Wherefore,

let thy voice  
Rise like a fountain for me night and

day.

For what are men better than sheep or  
goats

That nourish a blind life within the brain,  
If, knowing God, they lift not hands of  
prayer

Both for themselves and those who call  
them friend?

For so the whole round earth is every way  
Bound by gold chains about the feet of  
God.

But now farewell. I am going a long way  
With these thou seest — if indeed I go —  
(For all my mind is clouded with a doubt)

To the island-valley of Avilion;  
Where falls not hail, or rain, or any snow,

Nor ever wind blows loudly; but it lies  
Deep-meadow'd, happy, fair with orchard-  
lawns

And bowery hollows crown'd with sum-  
mer sea,

Where I will heal me of my grievous  
wound.'

So said he, and the barge with oar and  
sail

Moved from the brink, like some full-  
breasted swan

That, fluting a wild carol ere her death,  
Ruffles her pure cold plume, and takes

the flood  
With swarthy webs. Long stood Sir

Bedivere  
Revolving many memories, till the hull

Look'd one black dot against the verge  
of dawn,  
And on the mere the wailing died away.

HERE ended Hall, and our last light,  
that long  
Had wink'd and threaten'd darkness,  
flared and fell:

At which the Parson, sent to sleep with  
sound,

And waked with silence, grunted 'Good!'  
but we

Sat rapt: it was the tone with which he  
read—

Perhaps some modern touches here and  
there

Redeem'd it from the charge of nothing-  
ness—

Or else we loved the man, and prized his  
work;

I know not: but we sitting, as I said,  
The cock crew loud; as at that time of  
year

The lusty bird takes every hour for dawn:  
Then Francis, muttering, like a man ill-  
used,

'There now—that's nothing!' drew a  
little back,

And drove his heel into the smoulder'd  
log,

That sent a blast of sparkles up the flue:  
And so to bed; where yet in sleep I seem'd

To sail with Arthur under looming shores,  
Point after point; till on to dawn, when  
dreams

Begin to feel the truth and stir of day,  
To me, methought, who waited with a  
crowd,

There came a bark that, blowing forward,  
bore

King Arthur, like a modern gentleman  
Of stateliest port; and all the people  
cried,

'Arthur is come again: he cannot die.'  
Then those that stood upon the hills  
behind

Repeated—'Come again, and thrice as  
fair;'

And, further inland, voices echo'd—  
'Come

With all good things, and war shall be  
no more.'

At this a hundred bells began to peal,  
That with the sound I woke, and heard  
indeed

The clear church-bells ring in the  
Christmas-morn.

## THE GARDENER'S DAUGHTER;

### OR, THE PICTURES.

THIS morning is the morning of the day,  
When I and Eustace from the city went  
To see the gardener's daughter; I and he,  
Brothers in Art; a friendship so complete  
Portion'd in halves between us, that we  
grew

The fable of the city where we dwelt.

My Eustace might have sat for Her-  
cules;

So muscular he spread, so broad of breast.  
He, by some law that holds in love, and  
draws

The greater to the lesser, long desired  
A certain miracle of symmetry,

A miniature of loveliness, all grace  
Summ'd up and closed in little;—Juliet,  
she

So light of foot, so light of spirit—oh, she  
To me myself, for some thrèe careless  
moons,

The summer pilot of an empty heart  
Unto the shores of nothing! Know you not  
Such touches are but embassies of love,  
To tamper with the feelings, ere he found  
Empire for life? but Eustace painted her,  
And said to me, she sitting with us then,  
'When will *you* paint like this?' and I  
replied,

(My words were half in earnest, half in  
jest.)

'Tis not your work, but Love's. Love,  
unperceived,

A more ideal Artist he than all,  
Came, drew your pencil from you, made  
those eyes

Darker than darkest pansies, and that hair  
More black than ashbuds in the front of  
March.'

And Juliet answer'd laughing, 'Go and see  
The gardener's daughter: trust me, after  
that,

You scarce can fail to match his master-  
piece.'

And up we rose, and on the spur we went.

Not wholly in the busy world, nor quite  
Beyond it, blooms the garden that I love.  
News from the humming city comes to it  
In sound of funeral or of marriage bells;  
And, sitting muffled in dark leaves, you  
hear

The windy clanging of the minster clock;  
Although between it and the garden lies  
A league of grass, wash'd by a slow broad  
stream,

That, stir'd with languid pulses of the oar,  
Waves all its lazy lilies, and creeps on,  
Barge-laden, to three arches of a bridge  
Crown'd with the minster-towers.

The fields between  
Are dewy-fresh, browsed by deep-udder'd  
kine,

And all about the large lime feathers low,  
The lime a summer home of murmurous  
wings.

In that still place she, hoarded in herself,  
Grew, seldom seen; not less among us  
lived

Her fame from lip to lip. Who had not  
heard

Of Rose, the gardener's daughter? Where  
was he,

So blunt in memory, so old at heart,  
At such a distance from his youth in grief,  
That, having seen, forgot? The common  
mouth,

So gross to express delight, in praise of  
her

Grew oratory. Such a lord is Love,  
And Beauty such a mistress of the world.

And if I said that Fancy, led by Love,  
Would play with flying forms and images,  
Yet this is also true, that, long before  
I look'd upon her, when I heard her name  
My heart was like a prophet to my heart,  
And told me I should love. A crowd of  
hopes,

That sought to sow themselves like  
winged seeds,

Born out of everything I heard and saw,  
Flutter'd about my senses and my soul;  
And vague desires, like fitful blasts of  
balm

To one that travels quickly, made the air  
Of Life delicious, and all kinds of thought,  
That verged upon them, sweeter than the  
dream

Dream'd by a happy man, when the dark  
East,

Unseen, is brightening to his bridal morn.  
And sure this orbit of the memory folds  
For ever in itself the day we went

To see her. All the land in flowery  
squares,

Beneath a broad and equal-blowing wind,  
Smelt of the coming summer, as one  
large cloud

Drew downward: but all else of heaven  
was pure

Up to the Sun, and May from verge to  
verge,

And May with me from head to heel.  
And now,

As tho' 'twere yesterday, as tho' it were  
The hour just flown, that morn with all  
its sound,

(For those old Mays had thrice the life  
of these,)

Rings in mine ears. The steer forgot to  
graze,

And, where the hedge-row cuts the  
pathway, stood,

Leaning his horns into the neighbour  
field,

And lowing to his fellows. From the  
woods

Came voices of the well-contented doves.  
The lark could scarce get out his notes  
for joy,

But shook his song together as he near'd  
His happy home, the ground. To left  
and right,

The cuckoo told his name to all the hills;  
The mellow ouzel fluted in the elm;

The redcap whistled; and the nightingale  
Sang loud, as tho' he were the bird of  
day.

And Eustace turn'd, and smiling said  
to me,

'Hear how the bushes echo! by my life,  
These birds have joyful thoughts. Think  
you they sing

Like poets, from the vanity of song?  
Or have they any sense of why they sing?  
And would they praise the heavens for  
what they have?'

And I made answer, 'Were there nothing  
else

For which to praise the heavens but only  
love,



That only love were cause enough for  
praise.'

Lightly he laugh'd, as one that read  
my thought,  
And on we went; but ere an hour had  
pass'd,  
We reach'd a meadow slanting to the  
North;  
Down which a well-worn pathway courted  
us

To one green wicket in a privet hedge;  
This, yielding, gave into a grassy walk  
Thro' crowded lilac-ambush trimly  
pruned;

And one warm gust, full-fed with per-  
fume, blew  
Beyond us, as we enter'd in the cool.  
The garden stretches southward. In the  
midst

A cedar spread his dark-green layers of  
shade.

The garden-glasses glanced, and mo-  
mently

The twinkling laurel scatter'd silver lights.  
'Eustace,' I said, 'this wonder keeps  
the house.'

He nodded, but a moment afterwards  
He cried, 'Look! look!' Before he  
ceased I turn'd,  
And, ere a star can wink, beheld her there.

For up the porch there grew an Eastern  
rose,  
That, flowering high, the last night's gale  
had caught,

And blown across the walk. One arm  
aloft —

Gown'd in pure white, that fitted to the  
shape —

Holding the bush, to fix it back, she stood,  
A single stream of all her soft brown hair  
Pour'd on one side: the shadow of the  
flowers

Stole all the golden gloss, and, wavering  
Lovingly lower, trembled on her waist —  
Ah, happy shade — and still went waver-  
ing down,

But, ere it touch'd a foot, that might have  
danced

The greensward into greener circles, dipt,  
And mix'd with shadows of the common  
ground!

But the full day dwelt on her brows, and  
sunn'd

Her violet eyes, and all her Hebe bloom,  
And doubled his own warmth against her  
lips,

And on the bounteous wave of such a  
breast

As never pencil drew. Half light, half  
shade,

She stood, a sight to make an old man  
young.

So rapt, we near'd the house; but  
she, a Rose

In roses, mingled with her fragrant toil,  
Nor heard us come, nor from her ten-  
dance turn'd

Into the world without; till close at hand,  
And almost ere I knew mine own intent,  
This murmur broke the stillness of that  
air

Which brooded round about her :

'Ah, one rose,

One rose, but one, by those fair fingers  
cull'd,

Were worth a hundred kisses press'd on  
lips

Less exquisite than thine.'

She look'd: but all

Suffused with blushes — neither self-pos-  
sess'd

Nor startled, but betwixt this mood and  
that,

Divided in a graceful quiet — paused,  
And dropt the branch she held, and turn-  
ing, wound

Her looser hair in braid, and stir'd her  
lips

For some sweet answer, tho' no answer  
came,

Nor yet refused the rose, but granted it,  
And moved away, and left me, statue-like,  
In act to render thanks.

I, that whole day,

Saw her no more, altho' I linger'd there  
Till every daisy slept, and Love's white  
star

Beam'd thro' the thicken'd cedar in the  
dusk.

So home we went, and all the livelong  
way

With solemn gibe did Eustace banter me.  
'Now,' said he, 'will you climb the top  
of Art.

You cannot fail but work in hues to dim  
The Titianic Flora. Will you match

My Juliet? you, not you, — the Master,  
Love,

A more ideal Artist he than all.'

So home I went, but could not sleep  
for joy,

Reading her perfect features in the gloom,  
Kissing the rose she gave me o'er and o'er,  
And shaping faithful record of the glance  
That graced the giving — such a noise of  
life

Swarm'd in the golden present, such a  
voice

Call'd to me from the years to come, and  
such

A length of bright horizon rimm'd the  
dark.

And all that night I heard the watchman  
peal

The sliding season: all that night I heard  
The heavy clocks knolling the drowsy  
hours.

The drowsy hours, dispensers of all good,  
O'er the mute city stole with folded wings,  
Distilling odors on me as they went  
To greet their fairer sisters of the East.

Love at first sight, first-born, and heir  
to all,

Made this night thus. Henceforward  
squall nor storm

Could keep me from that Eden where she  
dwelt.

Light pretexts drew me; sometimes a  
Dutch love

For tulips: then for roses, moss or musk,  
To grace my city rooms; or fruits and  
cream

Served in the weeping elm; and more  
and more

A word could bring the colour to my  
cheek;

A thought would fill my eyes with happy  
dew;

Love trebled life within me, and with  
each

The year increased.

The daughters of the year,

One after one, thro' that still garden  
pass'd;

Each garlanded with her peculiar flower  
Danced into light, and died into the  
shade;

And each in passing touch'd with some  
new grace

Or seem'd to touch her, so that day by  
day,

Like one that never can be wholly known,  
Her beauty grew; till Autumn brought  
an hour

For Eustace, when I heard his deep 'I  
will,'

Breathed, like the covenant of a God, to  
hold

From thence thro' all the worlds: but I  
rose up

Full of his bliss, and following her dark  
eyes

Felt earth as air beneath me, till I reach'd  
The wicket-gate, and found her standing  
there.

There sat we down upon a garden  
mound,

Two mutually enfolded; Love, the third,  
Between us, in the circle of his arms

Enwound us both; and over many a range  
Of waning lime the gray cathedral towers,  
Across a hazy glimmer of the west,

Reveal'd their shining windows: from  
them clash'd

The bells; we listen'd; with the time  
we play'd,

We spoke of other things; we coursed  
about

The subject most at heart, more near and  
near,

Like doves about a dovecote, wheeling  
round

The central wish, until we settled there.

Then, in that time and place, I spoke  
to her,

Requiring, tho' I knew it was mine own,  
Yet for the pleasure that I took to hear,

Requiring at her hand the greatest gift,  
A woman's heart, the heart of her I loved;

And in that time and place she answer'd  
me,

And in the compass of three little words,  
More musical than ever came in one,

The silver fragments of a broken voice,  
Made me most happy, faltering, 'I am  
thine.'

Shall I cease here? Is this enough to  
say

That my desire, like all strongest hopes,  
By its own energy fulfill'd itself,

Merged in completion? Would you learn  
at full

How passion rose thro' circumstantial  
grades  
Beyond all grades develop'd ? and indeed  
I had not staid so long to tell you all,  
But while I mused came Memory with  
sad eyes,  
Holding the folded annals of my youth ;  
And while I mused, Love with knit brows  
went by,  
And with a flying finger swept my lips,  
And spake, 'Be wise : not easily forgiven  
Are those who, setting wide the doors  
that bar  
The secret bridal chambers of the heart,  
Let in the day.' Here, then, my words  
have end.  
Yet might I tell of meetings, of fare-  
wells —  
Of that which came between, more sweet  
than each,  
In whispers, like the whispers of the  
leaves  
That tremble round a nightingale — in  
sighs  
Which perfect Joy, perplex'd for utter-  
ance,  
Stole from her sister Sorrow. Might I  
not tell  
Of difference, reconciliation, pledges  
given,  
And vows, where there was never need  
of vows,  
And kisses, where the heart on one wild  
leap  
Hung tranced from all pulsation, as above  
The heavens between their fairy fleeces  
pale  
Sow'd all their mystic gulfs with fleeting  
stars ;  
Or while the balmy glooming, crescent-lit,  
Spread the light haze along the river-  
shores,  
And in the hollows ; or as once we met  
Unheedful, tho' beneath a whispering  
rain  
Night slid down one long stream of sigh-  
ing wind,  
And in her bosom bore the baby, Sleep.  
But this whole hour your eyes have  
been intent  
On that veil'd picture — veil'd, for what it  
holds  
May not be dwelt on by the common day.

This prelude has prepared thee. Raise  
thy soul ;  
Make thine heart ready with thine eyes :  
the time  
Is come to raise the veil.  
Behold her there,  
As I beheld her ere she knew my heart,  
My first, last love ; the idol of my youth,  
The darling of my manhood, and, alas !  
Now the most blessed memory of mine  
age.

## DORA.

WITH farmer Allan at the farm abode  
William and Dora. William was his son,  
And she his niece. He often look'd at  
them,  
And often thought, 'I'll make them man  
and wife.'  
Now Dora felt her uncle's will in all,  
And yearn'd toward William ; but the  
youth, because  
He had been always with her in the house,  
Thought not of Dora.

Then there came a day  
When Allan call'd his son, and said,  
'My son :  
I married late, but I would wish to see  
My grandchild on my knees before I die :  
And I have set my heart upon a match.  
Now therefore look to Dora ; she is well  
To look to ; thrifty too beyond her age.  
She is my brother's daughter : he and I  
Had once hard words, and parted, and  
he died  
In foreign lands ; but for his sake I bred  
His daughter Dora : take her for your  
wife ;  
For I have wish'd this marriage, night  
and day,  
For many years.' But William answer'd  
short :  
'I cannot marry Dora ; by my life,  
I will not marry Dora.' Then the old man  
Was wroth, and doubled up his hands,  
and said :  
'You will not, boy ! you dare to answer  
thus !  
But in my time a father's word was law,  
And so it shall be now for me. Look to it ;  
Consider, William : take a month to  
think,

And let me have an answer to my wish;  
Or, by the Lord that made me, you shall  
pack,

And never more darken my doors again.'  
But William answer'd madly; bit his  
lips,

And broke away. The more he look'd  
at her

The less he liked her; and his ways were  
harsh;

But Dora bore them meekly. Then  
before

The month was out he left his father's  
house,

And hired himself to work within the  
fields;

And half in love, half spite, he woo'd and  
wed

A labourer's daughter, Mary Morrison.

Then, when the bells were ringing,  
Allan call'd

His niece and said: 'My girl, I love you  
well;

But if you speak with him that was my  
son,

Or change a word with her he calls his  
wife,

My home is none of yours. My will is  
law.'

And Dora promised, being meek. She  
thought,

'It cannot be: my uncle's mind will  
change!'

And days went on, and there was born  
a boy

To William; then distresses came on  
him;

And day by day he pass'd his father's  
gate,

Heart-broken, and his father help'd him  
not.

But Dora stored what little she could  
save,

And sent it them by stealth, nor did they  
know

Who sent it; till at last a fever seized  
On William, and in harvest time he died.

Then Dora went to Mary. Mary sat  
And look'd with tears upon her boy, and  
thought

Hard things of Dora. Dora came and  
said:

'I have obey'd my uncle until now,

And I have sinn'd, for it was all thro' me  
This evil came on William at the first.

But, Mary, for the sake of him that's  
gone,

And for your sake, the woman that he  
chose,

And for this orphan, I am come to you:  
You know there has not been for these  
five years

So full a harvest: let me take the boy,  
And I will set him in my uncle's eye

Among the wheat; that when his heart  
is glad

Of the full harvest, he may see the boy,  
And bless him for the sake of him that's  
gone.'

And Dora took the child, and went  
her way

Across the wheat, and sat upon a mound  
That was unsown, where many poppies  
grew.

Far off the farmer came into the field  
And spied her not; for none of all his  
men

Dare tell him Dora waited with the child;  
And Dora would have risen and gone to  
him,

But her heart fail'd her; and the reapers  
reap'd,

And the sun fell, and all the land was  
dark.

But when the morrow came, she rose  
and took

The child once more, and sat upon the  
mound;

And made a little wreath of all the flowers  
That grew about, and tied it round his hat

To make him pleasing in her uncle's eye.  
Then when the farmer pass'd into the field

He spied her, and he left his men at work,  
And came and said: 'Where were you  
yesterday?

Whose child is that? What are you doing  
here?'

So Dora cast her eyes upon the ground,  
And answer'd softly, 'This is William's  
child!'

'And did I not,' said Allan, 'did I not  
Forbid you, Dora?' Dora said again:

'Do with me as you will, but take the  
child,

And bless him for the sake of him that's  
gone!'

And Allan said, 'I see it is a trick  
 Got up betwixt you and the woman there.  
 I must be taught my duty, and by you!  
 You knew my word was law, and yet you  
 dared  
 To slight it. Well—for I will take the  
 boy;  
 But go you hence, and never see me more.'  
 So saying, he took the boy, that cried  
 aloud  
 And struggled hard. The wreath of  
 flowers fell  
 At Dora's feet. She bowed upon her  
 hands,  
 And the boy's cry came to her from the  
 field,  
 More and more distant. She bow'd  
 down her head,  
 Remembering the day when first she came,  
 And all the things that had been. She  
 bow'd down  
 And wept in secret; and the reapers  
 reap'd,  
 And the sun fell, and all the land was  
 dark.  
 Then Dora went to Mary's house, and  
 stood  
 Upon the threshold. Mary saw the boy  
 Was not with Dora. She broke out in  
 praise  
 To God, that help'd her in her widow-  
 hood.  
 And Dora said, 'My uncle took the boy;  
 But, Mary, let me live and work with you:  
 He says that he will never see me more.'  
 Then answer'd Mary, 'This shall never be,  
 That thou shouldst take my trouble on  
 thyself:  
 And, now I think, he shall not have the  
 boy,  
 For he will teach him hardness, and to  
 slight  
 His mother; therefore thou and I will go,  
 And I will have my boy, and bring him  
 home;  
 And I will beg of him to take thee back:  
 But if he will not take thee back again,  
 Then thou and I will live within one  
 house,  
 And work for William's child, until he  
 grows  
 Of age to help us.'

So the women kiss'd

Each other, and set out, and reach'd the  
 farm.  
 The door was off the latch: they peep'd,  
 and saw  
 The boy set up betwixt his grandsire's  
 knees,  
 Who thrust him in the hollows of his arm,  
 And clapt him on the hands and on the  
 cheeks,  
 Like one that loved him: and the lad  
 stretch'd out  
 And babbled for the golden seal, that  
 hung  
 From Allan's watch, and sparkled by the  
 fire.  
 Then they came in: but when the boy  
 beheld  
 His mother, he cried out to come to her:  
 And Allan set him down, and Mary said:  
 'O Father!—if you let me call you  
 so—  
 I never came a-begging for myself,  
 Or William, or this child; but now I  
 come  
 For Dora: take her back; she loves you  
 well.  
 O Sir, when William died, he died at  
 peace  
 With all men; for I ask'd him, and he  
 said  
 He could not ever rue his marrying me—  
 I had been a patient wife: but, Sir, he  
 said  
 That he was wrong to cross his father  
 thus:  
 "God bless him!" he said, "and may he  
 never know  
 The troubles I have gone thro'!" Then  
 he turn'd  
 His face and pass'd—unhappy that I am!  
 But now, Sir, let me have my boy, for  
 you  
 Will make him hard, and he will learn  
 to slight  
 His father's memory; and take Dora  
 back,  
 And let all this be as it was before.'  
 So Mary said, and Dora hid her face  
 By Mary. There was silence in the room;  
 And all at once the old man burst in  
 sobs:—  
 'I have been to blame—to blame. I  
 have kill'd my son.'

I have kill'd him — but I loved him —  
my dear son.

May God forgive me! — I have been to  
blame.

Kiss me, my children?

Then they clung about  
The old man's neck, and kiss'd him many  
times.

And all the man was broken with re-  
morse;

And all his love came back a hundred-  
fold;

And for three hours he sobb'd o'er Will-  
iam's child

Thinking of William.

So those four abode  
Within one house together; and as years  
Went forward, Mary took another mate;  
But Dora lived unmarried till her death.

#### AUDLEY COURT.

'THE Bull, the Fleece are cramm'd, and  
not a room

For love or money. Let us picnic there  
At Audley Court.'

I spoke, while Audley feast  
Hum'd like a hive all round the narrow  
quay,

To Francis, with a basket on his arm,  
To Francis just alighted from the boat,  
And breathing of the sea. 'With all my  
heart,'

Said Francis. Then we shoulder'd thro'  
the swarm,

And rounded by the stillness of the beach  
To where the bay runs up its latest  
horn.

We left the dying ebb that faintly lipp'd  
The flat red granite; so by many a sweep  
Of meadow smooth from aftermath we  
reach'd

The griffin-guarded gates, and pass'd thro'  
all

The pillar'd dusk of sounding sycamores,  
And cross'd the garden to the gardener's  
lodge,

With all its casements bedded, and its  
walls

And chimneys muffled in the leafy vine.

There, on a slope of orchard, Francis  
laid

A damask napkin wrought with horse  
and hound,

Brought out a dusky loaf that smelt of  
home,

And, half-cut-down, a pasty costly-made,  
Where quail and pigeon, lark and leveret  
lay,

Like fossils of the rock, with golden yolks  
Imbedded and injellied; last, with these;  
A flask of cider from his father's vats,  
Prime, which I knew; and so we sat and  
eat

And talk'd old matters over; who was  
dead,

Who married, who was like to be, and  
how

The races went, and who would rent the  
hall:

Then touch'd upon the game, how scarce  
it was

This season; glancing thence, discuss'd  
the farm,

The four-field system, and the price of  
grain;

And struck upon the corn-laws, where  
we split,

And came again together on the king  
With heated faces; till he laugh'd aloud;  
And, while the blackbird on the pippin  
hung

To hear him, clapt his hand in mine and  
sang —

'Oh! who would fight and march and  
countermarch,

Be shot for sixpence in a battle-field,  
And shovell'd up into some bloody trench  
Where no one knows? but let me live  
my life.

'Oh! who would cast and balance at  
a desk,

Perch'd like a crow upon a three-legg'd  
stool,

Till all his juice is dried, and all his joints  
Are full of chalk? but let me live my  
life.

'Who'd serve the state? for if I carved  
my name

Upon the cliffs that guard my native land,  
I might as well have traced it in the sands;  
The sea wastes all: but let me live my life.

'Oh! who would love? I woo'd a  
woman once,

But she was sharper than an eastern wind,



And all my heart turn'd from her, as a  
thorn

Turns from the sea; but let me live my  
life.'

He sang his song, and I replied with  
mine:

I found it in a volume, all of songs,  
Knock'd down to me, when old Sir  
Robert's pride,

His books—the more the pity, so I said—  
Came to the hammer here in March—  
and this—

I set the words, and added names I knew.  
'Sleep, Ellen Aubrey, sleep, and dream  
of me:

Sleep, Ellen, folded in thy sister's arm,  
And sleeping, haply dream her arm is  
mine.

'Sleep, Ellen, folded in Emilia's arm;  
Emilia, fairer than all else but thou,  
For thou art fairer than all else that is.

'Sleep, breathing health and peace  
upon her breast:

Sleep, breathing love and trust against  
her lip:

I go to-night: I come to-morrow morn.

'I go, but I return: I would I were  
The pilot of the darkness and the dream.  
Sleep, Ellen Aubrey, love, and dream of  
me.'

So sang we each to either, Francis  
Hale,

The farmer's son, who lived across the bay,  
My friend; and I, that having where-  
withal,

And in the fallow leisure of my life  
A rolling stone of here and everywhere,  
Did what I would; but ere the night we  
rose

And saunter'd home beneath a moon,  
that, just

In crescent, dimly rain'd about the leaf  
Twilights of airy silver, till we reach'd  
The limit of the hills; and as we sank  
From rock to rock upon the glooming  
quay,

The town was hush'd beneath us: lower  
down

The bay was oily calm; the harbour-  
buoy,

Sole star of phosphorescence in the calm,  
With one green sparkle ever and anon  
Dipt by itself, and we were glad at heart.

## WALKING TO THE MAIL.

*John.* I'm glad I walk'd. How fresh  
the meadows look

Above the river, and, but a month ago,  
'The whole hill-side was redder than a fox.  
Is yon plantation where this byway joins  
The turnpike?

*James.* Yes.

*John.* And when does this come by?

*James.* The mail? At one o'clock.

*John.* What is it now?

*James.* A quarter to.

*John.* Whose house is that I see?  
No, not the County Member's with the  
vane:

Up higher with the yew-tree by it, and  
half

A score of gables.

*James.* That? Sir Edward Head's:  
But he's abroad: the place is to be sold.

*John.* Oh, his. He was not broken.

*James.* No, sir, he,  
Vex'd with a morbid devil in his blood  
That veil'd the world with jaundice, hid  
his face

From all men, and commercing with  
himself,

He lost the sense that handles daily  
life—

That keeps us all in order more or less—  
And sick of home went overseas for  
change.

*John.* And whither?

*James.* Nay, who knows? He's here  
and there.

But let him go; his devil goes with him,  
As well as with his tenant, Jocky Dawes.

*John.* What's that?

*James.* You saw the man—on Mon-  
day, was it?—

There by the humpback'd willow; half  
stands up

And bristles; half has fall'n and made a  
bridge;

And there he caught the younker tickling  
trout—

Caught *in flagrante*—what's the Latin  
word?—

*Delicto*: but his house, for so they say,  
Was haunted with a jolly ghost, that  
shook

The curtains, whined in lobbies, tapt at doors,  
And rummaged like a rat: no servant stay'd:

The farmer vext packs up his beds and chairs,  
And all his household stuff; and with his boy

Betwixt his knees, his wife upon the tilt,  
Sets out, and meets a friend who hails him, 'What!

You're flitting!' 'Yes, we're flitting,' says the ghost

(For they had pack'd the thing among the beds).

'Oh well,' says he, 'you flitting with us too—

Jack, turn the horses' heads and home again.'

*John.* He left his wife behind; for so I heard.

*James.* He left her, yes. I met my lady once:

A woman like a butt, and harsh as crabs.

*John.* Oh yet but I remember, ten years back—

'Tis now at least ten years—and then she was—

You could not light upon a sweeter thing:  
A body slight and round, and like a pear  
In growing, modest eyes, a hand, a foot  
Lessening in perfect cadence, and a skin  
As clean and white as privet when it flowers.

*James.* Ay, ay, the blossom fades, and they that loved

At first like dove and dove were cat and dog.

She was the daughter of a cottager,  
Out of her sphere. What betwixt shame and pride,

New things and old, himself and her, she sour'd

To what she is: a nature never kind!  
Like men, like manners: like breeds like, they say:

Kind nature is the best: those manners next

That fit us like a nature second-hand;  
Which are indeed the manners of the great.

*John.* But I had heard it was this bill that past,

And fear of change at home, that drove him hence.

*James.* That was the last drop in the cup of gall.

I once was near him, when his bailiff brought

A Chartist pike. You should have seen him wince

As from a venomous thing: he thought himself

A mark for all, and shudder'd, lest a cry  
Should break his sleep by night, and his nice eyes

Should see the raw mechanic's bloody thumbs

Sweat on his blazon'd chairs; but, sir, you know

That these two parties still divide the world—

Of those that want, and those that have: and still

The same old sore breaks out from age to age

With much the same result. Now I myself,

A Tory to the quick, was as a boy Destructive, when I had not what I would.

I was at school—a college in the South:  
There lived a flayflint near; we stole his fruit,

His hens, his eggs; but there was law for us;

We paid in person. He had a sow, sir. She,

With meditative grunts of much content,  
Lay great with pig, wallowing in sun and mud.

By night we dragg'd her to the college tower

From her warm bed, and up the corkscrew stair

With hand and rope we haled the groaning sow,

And on the leads we kept her till she pigg'd.

Large range of prospect had the mother sow,

And but for daily loss of one she loved  
As one by one we took them—but for this—

As never sow was higher in this world—  
Might have been happy: but what lot is pure?

We took them all, till she was left alone  
Upon her tower, the Niobe of swine,  
And so return'd unfarrow'd to her sty.

*John.* They found you out?

*James.* Not they.

*John.* Well — after all —

What know we of the secret of a man?  
His nerves were wrong. What ails us,  
who are sound,

That we should mimic this raw fool the  
world,

Which charts us all in its coarse blacks  
or whites,

As ruthless as a baby with a worm,  
As cruel as a schoolboy ere he grows  
To Pity — more from ignorance than will.

But put your best foot forward, or I  
fear

That we shall miss the mail: and here it  
comes

With five at top: as quaint a four-in-hand  
As you shall see — three pyebalds and a  
roan.

### EDWIN MORRIS;

#### OR, THE LAKE.

O ME, my pleasant rambles by the lake,  
My sweet, wild, fresh three quarters of a  
year,

My one Oasis in the dust and drouth  
Of city life! I was a sketcher then:  
See here, my doing: curves of mountain,  
bridge,

Boat, island, ruins of a castle, built  
When men knew how to build, upon a  
rock

With turrets lichen-gilded like a rock:  
And here, new-comers in an ancient  
hold,

New-comers from the Mersey, million-  
aires,  
Here lived the Hills — a Tudor-chimnied  
bulk

Of mellow brickwork on an isle of bowers.

O me, my pleasant rambles by the lake  
With Edwin Morris and with Edward  
Bull

The curate; he was fatter than his cure.

But Edwin Morris, he that knew the  
names,

Long learned names of agaric, moss and  
fern,

Who forged a thousand theories of the  
rocks,

Who taught me how to skate, to row, to  
swim,

Who read me rhymes elaborately good,  
His own — I call'd him Crichton, for he  
seem'd

All-perfect, finish'd to the finger nail.

And once I ask'd him of his early life,  
And his first passion; and he answer'd  
me;

And well his words became him: was he  
not

A full-cell'd honeycomb of eloquence  
Stored from all flowers? Poet-like he  
spoke.

'My love for Nature is as old as I;  
But thirty moons, one honeymoon to that,  
And three rich sennights more, my love  
for her.

My love for Nature and my love for her,  
Of different ages, like twin-sisters grew,  
Twin-sisters differently beautiful.

To some full music rose and sank the sun,  
And some full music seem'd to move and  
change

With all the varied changes of the dark,  
And either twilight and the day between;  
For daily hope fulfill'd, to rise again  
Revolving toward fulfilment, made it  
sweet

To walk, to sit, to sleep, to wake, to  
breathe.'

Or this or something like to this he  
spoke.

Then said the fat-faced curate Edward  
Bull,

'I take it, God made the woman for  
the man,

And for the good and increase of the  
world.

A pretty face is well, and this is well,  
To have a dame indoors, that trims us up,  
And keeps us tight; but these unreal ways  
Seem but the theme of writers, and in-  
deed

Worn threadbare. Man is made of solid  
stuff.

I say, God made the woman for the man,  
And for the good and increase of the  
world.'

'Parson,' said I, 'you pitch the pipe  
too low :

But I have sudden touches, and can run  
My faith beyond my practice into his :  
Tho' if, in dancing after Letty Hill,  
I do not hear the bells upon my cap,  
I scarce have other music : yet say on.  
What should one give to light on such a  
dream?'

I ask'd him half-sardonically.

'Give?

Give all thou art,' he answer'd, and a  
light

Of laughter dimpled in his swarthy cheek ;  
'I would have hid her needle in my  
heart,

To save her little finger from a scratch  
No deeper than the skin : my ears could  
hear

Her lightest breath ; her least remark  
was worth

The experience of the wise. I went and  
came ;

Her voice fled always thro' the summer  
land ;

I spoke her name alone. Thrice-happy  
days !

The flower of each, those moments when  
we met,

The crown of all, we met to part no  
more.'

Were not his words delicious, I a beast  
To take them as I did? but something  
jarr'd ;

Whether he spoke too largely ; that there  
seem'd

A touch of something false, some self-  
conceit,

Or over-smoothness : howsoe'er it was,  
He scarcely hit my humour, and I said :

'Friend Edwin, do not think yourself  
alone

Of all men happy. Shall not Love to  
me,

As in the Latin song I learnt at school,  
Sneeze out a full God-bless-you right and  
left?

But you can talk: yours is a kindly vein :  
I have, I think, — Heaven knows, — as  
much within ;

Have, or should have, but for a thought  
or two,

That like a purple beech among the greens  
Looks out of place : 'tis from no want in  
her :

It is my shyness, or my self-distrust,  
Or something of a wayward modern mind  
Dissecting passion. Time will set me  
right.'

So spoke I knowing not the things  
that were.

Then said the fat-faced curate, Edward  
Bull :

'God made the woman for the use of  
man,

And for the good and increase of the  
world.'

And I and Edwin laughed ; and now we  
paused

About the windings of the marge to hear  
The soft wind blowing over meadowy  
holms

And alders, garden-isles ; and now we left  
The clerk behind us, I and he, and ran  
By ripply shallows of the lipping lake,  
Delighted with the freshness and the  
sound.

But, when the bracken rusted on their  
crag,

My suit had wither'd, nipt to death by  
him

That was a God, and is a lawyer's clerk,  
The rentroll Cupid of our rainy isles.

'Tis true, we met ; one hour I had, no  
more :

She sent a note, the seal an *Elle vous  
sui*,

The close, 'Your Letty, only yours ;' and  
this

Thrice underscored. The friendly mist  
of morn

Clung to the lake. I boated over, ran  
My craft aground, and heard with beat-  
ing heart

The Sweet-Gale rustle round the shelving  
keel ;

And out I stept, and up I crept : she  
moved,

Like Proserpine in Enna, gathering  
flowers:

Then low and sweet I whistled thrice;  
and she,  
She turn'd, we closed, we kiss'd, swore  
faith, I breathed

In some new planet: a silent cousin stole  
Upon us and departed: 'Leave,' she  
cried,

'O leave me!' 'Never, dearest, never:  
here

I brave the worst: 'and while we stood  
like fools

Embracing, all at once a score of pugs  
And poodles yell'd within, and out they  
came

Trustees and Aunts and Uncles. 'What,  
with him!

Go' (shrill'd the cotton-spinning chorus);  
'him!'

I choked. Again they shriek'd the  
burthen — 'Him!'

Again with hands of wild rejection 'Go! —  
Girl, get you in!' She went — and in  
one month

They wedded her to sixty thousand pounds,  
To lands in Kent and messuages in York,  
And slight Sir Robert with his watery  
smile

And educated whisker. But for me,  
They set an ancient creditor to work:  
It seems I broke a close with force and  
arms:

There came a mystic token from the king  
To greet the sheriff, needless courtesy!

I read, and fled by night, and flying  
turn'd:

Her taper glimmer'd in the lake below:  
I turn'd once more, close-button'd to the  
storm;

So left the place, left Edwin, nor have seen  
Him since, nor heard of her, nor cared to  
hear.

Nor cared to hear? perhaps: yet long  
ago

I have pardon'd little Letty; not indeed,  
It may be, for her own dear sake but this,  
She seems a part of those fresh days to me;  
For in the dust and drouth of London life  
She moves among my visions of the lake,  
While the prime swallow dips his wing,  
or then

While the gold-lily blows, and overhead  
The light cloud smoulders on the summer  
crag.

## ST. SIMEON STYLITES.

ALTHO' I be the basest of mankind,  
From scalp to sole one slough and crust  
of sin,

Unfit for earth, unfit for heaven, scarce  
meet

For troops of devils, mad with blasphemy,  
I will not cease to grasp the hope I hold  
Of saintdom, and to clamour, mourn and  
sob,

Battering the gates of heaven with storms  
of prayer,

Have mercy, Lord, and take away my  
sin.

Let this avail, just, dreadful, mighty  
God,

This not be all in vain, that thrice ten  
years,

Thrice multiplied by superhuman pangs,  
In hungers and in thirsts, fevers and cold,  
In coughs, aches, stitches, ulcerous throes  
and cramps,

A sign betwixt the meadow and the cloud,  
Patient on this tall pillar I have borne  
Rain, wind, frost, heat, hail, damp, and  
sleet, and snow;

And I had hoped that ere this period closed  
Thou wouldst have caught me up into thy  
rest,

Denying not these weather-beaten limbs  
The meed of saints, the white robe and  
the palm.

O take the meaning, Lord: I do not  
breathe,

Not whisper, any murmur of complaint.  
Pain heap'd ten-hundred-fold to this, were  
still

Less burthen, by ten-hundred-fold, to bear,  
Than were those lead-like tons of sin,  
that crush'd

My spirit flat before thee.

O Lord, Lord,  
Thou knowest I bore this better at the  
first,

For I was strong and hale of body then;  
And tho' my teeth, which now are dropt  
away,

Would chatter with the cold, and all my beard

Was tagg'd with icy fringes in the moon,  
I drown'd the whoopings of the owl with sound

Of pious hymns and psalms, and sometimes saw

An angel stand and watch me, as I sang.  
Now am I feeble grown; my end draws nigh;

I hope my end draws nigh: half deaf I am,

So that I scarce can hear the people hum  
About the column's base, and almost blind,  
And scarce can recognise the fields I know;

And both my thighs are rotted with the dew;

Yet cease I not to clamour and to cry,  
While my stiff spine can hold my weary head,

Till all my limbs drop piecemeal from the stone,

Have mercy, mercy: take away my sin.

O Jesus, if thou wilt not save my soul,  
Who may be saved? who is it may be saved?

Who may be made a saint, if I fail here?  
Show me the man hath suffer'd more than I.

For did not all thy martyrs die one death?  
For either they were stoned, or crucified,  
Or burn'd in fire, or boil'd in oil, or sawn  
In twain beneath the ribs; but I die here  
To-day, and whole years long, a life of death.

Bear witness, if I could have found a way  
(And heedfully I sifted all my thought)  
More slowly-painful to subdue this home  
Of sin, my flesh, which I despise and hate,  
I had not stinted practice, O my God.

For not alone this pillar-punishment,  
Not this alone I bore: but while I lived  
In the white convent down the valley there,  
For many weeks about my loins I wore  
The rope that haled the buckets from the well,

Twisted as tight as I could knot the noose;  
And spake not of it to a single soul,  
Until the ulcer, eating thro' my skin,  
Betray'd my secret penance, so that all  
My brethren marvell'd greatly. More  
than this

I bore, whereof, O God, thou knowest all.  
Three winters, that my soul might grow to thee,

I lived up there on yonder mountain side.

My right leg chain'd into the crag, I lay  
Pent in a roofless close of ragged stones;  
Inswathed sometimes in wandering mist,  
and twice

Black'd with thy branding thunder, and sometimes

Sucking the damps for drink, and eating not,

Except the spare chance-gift of those that came

To touch my body and be heal'd, and live:  
And they say then that I work'd miracles,  
Whereof my fame is loud amongst mankind,

Cured lameness, palsies, cancers. Thou,  
O God,

Knowest alone whether this was or no.

Have mercy, mercy! cover all my sin.

Then, that I might be more alone with thee,

Three years I lived upon a pillar, high  
Six cubits, and three years on one of twelve;

And twice three years I crouch'd on one that rose

Twenty by measure; last of all, I grew  
Twice ten long weary weary years to this,  
That numbers forty cubits from the soil.

I think that I have borne as much as this—

Or else I dream—and for so long a time,  
If I may measure time by yon slow light,  
And this high dial, which my sorrow crowns—

So much—even so.

And yet I know not well,  
For that the evil ones come here, and say,  
'Fall down, O Simeon: thou hast suffer'd long

For ages and for ages!' then they prate  
Of penances I cannot have gone thro',  
Perplexing me with lies; and oft I fall,  
Maybe for months, in such blind lethargies  
That Heaven, and Earth, and Time are choked.

But yet  
Bethink thee, Lord, while thou and all  
the saints



Enjoy themselves in heaven, and men on earth

House in the shade of comfortable roofs,  
Sit with their wives by fires, eat wholesome food,

And wear warm clothes, and even beasts have stalls,

I, 'tween the spring and downfall of the light,

Bow down one thousand and two hundred times,

To Christ, the Virgin Mother, and the saints;

Or in the night, after a little sleep,  
I wake: the chill stars sparkle; I am wet  
With drenching dews, or stiff with crackling frost.

I wear an undress'd goatskin on my back;

A grazing iron collar grinds my neck;  
And in my weak, lean arms I lift the cross,

And strive and wrestle with thee till I die:

O mercy, mercy! wash away my sin.

O Lord, thou knowest what a man I am;

A sinful man, conceived and born in sin:  
'Tis their own doing; this is none of mine;

Lay it not to me. Am I to blame for this,

That here come those that worship me?  
Ha! ha!

They think that I am somewhat. What am I?

The silly people take me for a saint,  
And bring me offerings of fruit and flowers:

And I, in truth (thou wilt bear witness here)

Have all in all endured as much, and more

Than many just and holy men, whose names

Are register'd and calendar'd for saints.

Good people, you do ill to kneel to me.  
What is it I can have done to merit this?

I am a sinner viler than you all.

It may be I have wrought some miracles,  
And cured some halt and maim'd; but what of that?

It may be, no one, even among the saints,

May match his pains with mine; but what of that?

Yet do not rise; for you may look on me,  
And in your looking you may kneel to God.

Speak! is there any of you halt or maim'd?  
I think you know I have some power with Heaven

From my long penance: let him speak his wish.

Yes, I can heal him. Power goes forth from me.

They say that they are heal'd. Ah, hark! they shout

'St. Simeon Stylites.' Why, if so, God reaps a harvest in me. O my soul,

God reaps a harvest in thee. If this be, Can I work miracles and not be saved?

This is not told of any. They were saints. It cannot be but that I shall be saved;

Yea, crown'd a saint. They shout, 'Behold a saint!'

And lower voices saint me from above.

Courage, St. Simeon! This dull chrysalis  
Cracks into shining wings, and hope ere death

Spreads more and more and more, that God hath now

Sponged and made blank of crimeful record all

My mortal archives.

O my sons, my sons,

I, Simeon of the pillar, by surname

Stylites, among men; I, Simeon,

The watcher on the column till the end;  
I, Simeon, whose brain the sunshine

bakes;

I, whose bald brows in silent hours become

Unnaturally hoar with rime, do now

From my high nest of penance here proclaim

That Pontius and Iscariot by my side  
Show'd like fair seraphs: On the coals

I lay,

A vessel full of sin: all hell beneath

Made me boil over. Devils pluck'd my sleeve,

Abaddon and Asmodeus caught at me.

I smote them with the cross; they swarm'd again.

In bed like monstrous apes they crush'd my chest:

They flapp'd my light out as I read: I  
 saw  
 Their faces grow between me and my  
 book;  
 With colt-like whinny and with hoggish  
 whine  
 They burst my prayer. Yet this way  
 was left,  
 And by this way I 'scaped them. Mortify  
 Your flesh, like me, with scourges and  
 with thorns;  
 Smite, shrink not, spare not. If it may  
 be, fast  
 Whole Lents, and pray. I hardly, with  
 slow steps,  
 With slow, faint steps, and much exceed-  
 ing pain,  
 Have scrambled past those pits of fire,  
 that still  
 Sing in mine ears. But yield not me the  
 praise:  
 God only thro' his bounty hath thought fit,  
 Among the powers and princes of this  
 world,  
 To make me an example to mankind,  
 Which few can reach to. Yet I do not  
 say  
 But that a time may come—yea, even  
 now,  
 Now, now, his footsteps smite the thresh-  
 old stairs  
 Of life—I say, that time is at the doors  
 When you may worship me without re-  
 proach;  
 For I will leave my relics in your land,  
 And you may carve' a shrine about my  
 dust,  
 And burn a fragrant lamp before my  
 bones,  
 When I am gather'd to the glorious  
 saints.  
 While I spake then, a sting of shrewd-  
 est pain  
 Ran shrivelling thro' me, and a cloudlike  
 change,  
 In passing, with a grosser film made thick  
 These heavy, horny eyes. The end! the  
 end!  
 Surely the end! What's here? a shape,  
 a shade,  
 A flash of light. Is that the angel there  
 That holds a crown? Come, blessed  
 brother, come.

I know thy glittering face. I waited  
 long;  
 My brows are ready. What! deny it  
 now?  
 Nay, draw, draw, draw nigh. So I  
 clutch it. Christ!  
 'Tis gone: 'tis here again; the crown!  
 the crown!  
 So now 'tis fitted on and grows to me,  
 And from it melt the dews of Paradise,  
 Sweet! sweet! spikenard, and balm, and  
 frankincense.  
 Ah! let me not be fool'd, sweet saints:  
 I trust  
 That I am whole, and clean, and meet  
 for Heaven.  
 Speak, if there be a priest, a man of  
 God,  
 Among you there, and let him presently  
 Approach, and lean a ladder on the  
 shaft,  
 And climbing up into my airy home,  
 Deliver me the blessed sacrament;  
 For by the warning of the Holy Ghost,  
 I prophesy that I shall die to-night,  
 A quarter before twelve.  
 But thou, O Lord,  
 Aid all this foolish people; let them take  
 Example, pattern: lead them to thy  
 light.

#### THE TALKING OAK.

ONCE more the gate behind me falls;  
 Once more before my face  
 I see the moulder'd Abbey-walls,  
 That stand within the chace.  
 Beyond the lodge the city lies,  
 Beneath its drift of smoke;  
 And ah! with what delighted eyes  
 I turn to yonder oak.  
 For when my passion first began,  
 Ere that, which in me burn'd,  
 The love, that makes me thrice a man,  
 Could hope itself return'd;  
 To yonder oak within the field  
 I spoke without restraint,  
 And with a larger faith appeal'd  
 Than Papist unto Saint.

For oft I talk'd with him apart,  
 And told him of my choice,  
 Until he plagiarised a heart,  
 And answer'd with a voice.

Tho' what he whisper'd under Heaven  
 None else could understand;  
 I found him garrulously given,  
 A babbler in the land.

But since I heard him make reply  
 Is many a weary hour;  
 'Twere well to question him, and try  
 If yet he keeps the power.

Hail, hidden to the knees in fern,  
 Broad Oak of Sumner-chace,  
 Whose topmost branches can discern  
 The roofs of Sumner-place!

Say thou, whereon I carved her name,  
 If ever maid or spouse,  
 As fair as my Olivia, came  
 To rest beneath thy boughs.—

'O Walter, I have shelter'd here  
 Whatever maiden grace  
 The good old Summers, year by year  
 Made ripe in Sumner-chace:

'Old Summers, when the monk was fat,  
 And, issuing shorn and sleek,  
 Would twist his girdle tight, and pat  
 The girls upon the cheek,

'Ere yet, in scorn of Peter's-pence,  
 And number'd bead, and shrift,  
 Bluff Harry broke into the spence  
 And turn'd the cowls adrift:

'And I have seen some score of those  
 Fresh faces, that would thrive  
 When his man-minded offset rose  
 To chase the deer at five;

'And all that from the town would  
 stroll,  
 Till that wild wind made work  
 In which the gloomy brewer's soul  
 Went by me, like a stork:

'The slight she-slips of loyal blood,  
 And others, passing praise,

Strait-laced, but all-too-full in bud  
 For puritanic stays:

'And I have shadow'd many a group  
 Of beauties, that were born  
 In teacup-times of hood and hoop,  
 Or while the patch was worn;

'And, leg and arm with love-knots gay,  
 About me leap'd and laugh'd  
 The modish Cupid of the day,  
 And shrill'd his tinsel shaft.

'I swear (and else may insects prick  
 Each leaf into a gall)  
 This girl, for whom your heart is sick,  
 Is three times worth them all;

'For those and theirs, by Nature's law,  
 Have faded long ago;  
 But in these latter springs I saw  
 Your own Olivia blow,

'From when she gamboll'd on the  
 greens  
 A baby-germ, to when  
 The maiden blossoms of her teens  
 Could number five from ten.

'I swear, by leaf, and wind, and rain,  
 (And hear me with thine ears,)  
 That, tho' I circle in the grain  
 Five hundred rings of years—

'Yet, since I first could cast a shade,  
 Did never creature pass  
 So slightly, musically made,  
 So light upon the grass:

'For as to fairies, that will flit  
 To make the greensward fresh,  
 I hold them exquisitely knit,  
 But far too spare of flesh.'

O hide thy knotted knees in fern,  
 And overlook the chace;  
 And from thy topmost branch discern  
 The roofs of Sumner-place.

But thou, whereon I carved her name,  
 That oft hast heard my vows,  
 Declare when last Olivia came  
 To sport beneath thy boughs.

'O yesterday, you know, the fair  
Was holden at the town;  
Her father left his good arm-chair,  
And rode his hunter down.

'And with him Albert came on his.  
I look'd at him with joy:  
As cowslip unto oxlip is,  
So seems she to the boy.

'An hour had past — and, sitting straight  
Within the low-wheel'd chaise,  
Her mother trundled to the gate  
Behind the dappled grays.

'But as for her, she stay'd at home,  
And on the roof she went,  
And down the way you use to come,  
She look'd with discontent.

'She left the novel half-uncut  
Upon the rosewood shelf;  
She left the new piano shut:  
She could not please herself.

'Then ran she, gamesome as the colt,  
And livelier than a lark  
She sent her voice thro' all the holt  
Before her, and the park.

'A light wind chased her on the wing,  
And in the chase grew wild,  
As close as night be would he cling  
About the darling child:

'But light as any wind that blows  
So fleetly did she stir,  
The flower, she touch'd on, dipt and rose,  
And turn'd to look at her.

'And here she came, and round me  
play'd,  
And sang to me the whole  
Of those three stanzas that you made  
About my "giant bole;"

'And in a fit of frolic mirth  
She strove to span my waist:  
Alas, I was so broad of girth,  
I could not be embraced.

'I wish'd myself the fair young beech  
That here beside me stands,

That round me, clasping each in each,  
She might have lock'd her hands.

'Yet seem'd the pressure thrice as sweet  
As woodbine's fragile hold,  
Or when I feel about my feet  
The berried briony fold.'

O muffle round thy knees with fern,  
And shadow Sumner-chace!  
Long may thy topmost branch discern  
The roofs of Sumner-place!

But tell me, did she read the name  
I carved with many vows  
When last with throbbing heart I came  
To rest beneath thy boughs?

'O yes, she wander'd round and round  
These knotted knees of mine,  
And found, and kiss'd the name she  
found,  
And sweetly murmur'd thine.

'A teardrop trembled from its source,  
And down my surface crept.  
My sense of touch is something coarse,  
But I believe she wept.

'Then flush'd her cheek with rosy light,  
She glanced across the plain;  
But not a creature was in sight:  
She kiss'd me once again.

'Her kisses were so close and kind,  
That, trust me on my word,  
Hard wood I am, and wrinkled rind,  
But yet my sap was stirr'd:

'And even into my inmost ring  
A pleasure I discern'd,  
Like those blind motions of the Spring,  
That show the year is turn'd.

'Thrice-happy he that may caress  
The ringlet's waving balm —  
The cushions of whose touch may press  
The maiden's tender palm.

'I, rooted here among the groves  
But languidly adjust  
My vapid vegetable loves  
With anthers and with dust:

'For ah! my friend, the days were brief  
Whereof the poets talk,  
When that, which breathes within the  
leaf,  
Could slip its bark and walk.

'But could I, as in times foregone,  
From spray, and branch, and stem,  
Have suck'd and gather'd into one  
The life that spreads in them,

'She had not found me so remiss;  
But lightly issuing thro',  
I would have paid her kiss for kiss,  
With usury thereto.'

O flourish high, with leafy towers,  
And overlook the lea,  
Pursue thy loves among the bowers  
But leave thou mine to me.

O flourish, hidden deep in fern,  
Old oak, I love thee well;  
A thousand thanks for what I learn  
And what remains to tell.

'Tis little more: the day was warm;  
At last, tired out with play,  
She sank her head upon her arm  
And at my feet she lay.

'Her eyelids dropp'd their silken eaves.  
I breathed upon her eyes  
Thro' all the summer of my leaves  
A welcome mix'd with sighs.

'I took the swarming sound of life —  
The music from the town —  
The murmurs of the drum and fife  
And lull'd them in my own.

'Sometimes I let a sunbeam slip,  
To light her shaded eye;  
A second flutter'd round her lip  
Like a golden butterfly;

'A third would glimmer on her neck  
To make the necklace shine;  
Another slid, a sunny fleck,  
From head to ankle fine.

'Then close and dark my arms I spread,  
And shadow'd all her rest —

Dropt dews upon her golden head,  
An acorn in her breast.

'But in a pet she started up,  
And pluck'd it out, and drew  
My little oakling from the cup,  
And flung him in the dew.

'And yet it was a graceful gift —  
I felt a pang within  
As when I see the woodman lift  
His axe to slay my kin.

'I shook him down because he was  
The finest on the tree.  
He lies beside thee on the grass.  
O kiss him once for me.

'O kiss him twice and thrice for me,  
That have no lips to kiss,  
For never yet was oak on lea  
Shall grow so fair as this.'

Step deeper yet in herb and fern,  
Look further thro' the chace,  
Spread upward till thy boughs discern  
The front of Summer-place.

This fruit of thine by Love is blest,  
That but a moment lay  
Where fairer fruit of Love may rest  
Some happy future day.

I kiss it twice, I kiss it thrice,  
The warmth it thence shall win  
To riper life may magnetise  
The baby-oak within.

But thou, while kingdoms overset,  
Or lapse from hand to hand,  
Thy leaf shall never fail, nor yet  
Thine acorn in the land.

May never saw dismember thee,  
Nor wielded axe disjoint,  
Thou art the fairest-spoken tree  
From here to Lizard-point.

O rock upon thy towery-top  
All throats that gurgle sweet!  
All starry culmination drop  
Balm-dews to bathe thy feet!

All grass of silky feather grow —  
 And while he sinks or swells  
 The full south-breeze around thee blow  
 The sound of minster bells.

The fat earth feed thy branchy root,  
 That under deeply strikes!  
 The northern morning o'er thee shoot,  
 High up, in silver spikes!

Nor ever lightning char thy grain,  
 But, rolling as in sleep,  
 Low thunders bring the mellow rain,  
 That makes thee broad and deep!

And hear me swear a solemn oath,  
 That only by thy side  
 Will I to Olive plight my troth,  
 And gain her for my bride.

And when my marriage morn may fall,  
 She, Dryad-like, shall wear  
 Alternate leaf and acorn-ball  
 In wreath about her hair.

And I will work in prose and rhyme,  
 And praise thee more in both  
 Than bard has honour'd beech or lime,  
 Or that Thessalian growth,

In which the swarthy ringdove sat,  
 And mystic sentence spoke;  
 And more than England honours that,  
 Thy famous brother-oak,

Wherein the younger Charles abode  
 Till all the paths were dim,  
 And far below the Roundhead rode,  
 And humm'd a surly hymn.

#### LOVE AND DUTY.

Of love that never found his earthly close,  
 What sequel? Streaming eyes and  
 breaking hearts?

Or all the same as if he had not been?  
 Not so. Shall Error in the round of  
 time

Still father Truth? O shall the braggart  
 shout

For some blind glimpse of freedom work  
 itself

Thro' madness, hated by the wise, to law,  
 System and empire? Sin itself be found  
 The cloudy porch oft opening on the  
 Sun?

And only he, this wonder, dead, become  
 Mere highway dust? or year by year  
 alone

Sit brooding in the ruins of a life,  
 Nightmare of youth, the spectre of him-  
 self?

If this were thus, if this, indeed, were  
 all,

Better the narrow brain, the stony heart,  
 The staring eye glazed o'er with sapless  
 days,

The long mechanic pacings to and fro,  
 The set gray life, and apathetic end.  
 But am I not the nobler thro' thy love?  
 O three times less unworthy! likewise  
 thou

Art more thro' Love, and greater than  
 thy years,

The Sun will run his orbit, and the Moon  
 Her circle. Wait, and Love himself will  
 bring

The drooping flower of knowledge  
 changed to fruit

Of wisdom. Wait: my faith is large in  
 Time,

And that which shapes it to some perfect  
 end.

Will some one say, Then why not ill  
 for good?

Why took ye not your Pastime? To that  
 man

My work shall answer, since I knew the  
 right

And did it; for a man is not as God,  
 But then most Godlike being most a man.  
 — So let me think 'tis well for thee and  
 me —

Ill-fated that I am, what lot is mine  
 Whose foresight preaches peace, my heart  
 so slow

To feel it! For how hard it seem'd to  
 me,

When eyes, love-languid thro' half tears  
 would dwell

One earnest, earnest moment upon mine,  
 Then not to dare to see! when thy low  
 voice,

Faltering, would break its syllables, to  
 keep



My own full-tuned, — hold passion in a  
 leash,  
 And not leap forth and fall about thy  
 neck,  
 And on thy bosom (deep desired relief!)  
 Rain out the heavy mist of tears, that  
 weigh'd  
 Upon my brain, my senses and my soul!  
 For Love himself took part against  
 himself  
 To warn us off, and Duty loved of Love —  
 O this world's curse — beloved but hated  
 — came  
 Like Death betwixt thy dear embrace and  
 mine,  
 And crying, 'Who is this? behold thy  
 bride,'  
 She push'd me from thee.

If the sense is hard  
 To alien ears, I did not speak to these —  
 No, not to thee, but to thyself in me:  
 Hard is my doom and thine: thou  
 knowest it all.

Could Love part thus? was it not well  
 to speak,  
 To have spoken once? It could not but  
 be well.

The slow sweet hours that bring us all  
 things good,  
 The slow sad hours that bring us all  
 things ill,  
 And all good things from evil, brought  
 the night

In which we sat together and alone,  
 And to the want, that hollow'd all the  
 heart,

Gave utterance by the yearning of an eye,  
 That burn'd upon its object thro' such  
 tears

As flow but once a life.

The trance gave way  
 To those caresses, when a hundred times  
 In that last kiss, which never was the last,  
 Farewell, like endless welcome, lived and  
 died.

Then follow'd counsel, comfort, and the  
 words

That make a man feel strong in speaking  
 truth;

Till now the dark was worn, and overhead  
 The lights of sunset and of sunrise mix'd  
 In that brief night; the summer night,  
 that paused

Among her stars to hear us; stars that  
 hung  
 Love-charm'd to listen: all the wheels of  
 Time

Spun round in station, but the end had  
 come.

O then like those, who clench their  
 nerves to rush

Upon their dissolution, we two rose,  
 There — closing like an individual life —  
 In one blind cry of passion and of pain,  
 Like bitter accusation ev'n to death,  
 Caught up the whole of love and utter'd  
 it,

And bade adieu for ever.

Live — yet live —  
 Shall sharpest pathos blight us, knowing  
 all

Life needs for life is possible to will —  
 Live happy; tend thy flowers; be tended  
 by

My blessing! Should my Shadow cross  
 thy thoughts

Too sadly for their peace, remand it thou  
 For calmer hours to Memory's darkest  
 hold,

If not to be forgotten — not at once —  
 Not all forgotten. Should it cross thy  
 dreams,

O might it come like one that looks con-  
 tent,

With quiet eyes unfaithful to the truth,  
 And point thee forward to a distant light,  
 Or seem to lift a burthen from thy heart  
 And leave thee freer, till thou wake  
 refresh'd

Then when the first low matin-chirp hath  
 grown

Full quire, and morning driv'n her plow  
 of pearl

Far furrowing into light the mounded  
 rack,

Beyond the fair green field and eastern  
 sea.

### THE GOLDEN YEAR.

WELL, you shall have that song which  
 Leonard wrote:

It was last summer on a tour in Wales:  
 Old James was with me: we that day  
 had been

Up Snowdon; and I wish'd for Leonard  
 there,  
 And found him in Llanberis: then we  
 crost  
 Between the lakes, and clamber'd half  
 way up  
 The counter side; and that same song of  
 his  
 He told me; for I banter'd him, and  
 swore  
 They said he lived shut up within himself,  
 A tongue-tied Poet in the feverous days,  
 That, setting the *how much* before the  
*how*,  
 Cry, like the daughters of the horseleech,  
 'Give,  
 Cram us with all,' but count not me the  
 herd!  
 To which 'They call me what they  
 will,' he said:  
 'But I was born too late: the fair new  
 forms,  
 That float about the threshold of an age,  
 Like truths of Science waiting to be  
 caught—  
 Catch me who can, and make the catcher  
 crown'd—  
 Are taken by the forelock. Let it be.  
 But if you care indeed to listen, hear  
 These measured words, my work of  
 yestermorn.  
 'We sleep and wake and sleep, but all  
 things move;  
 The Sun flies forward to his brother Sun;  
 The dark Earth follows wheel'd in her  
 ellipse;  
 And human things returning on them-  
 selves  
 Move onward, leading up the golden year.  
 'Ah, tho' the times, when some new  
 thought can bud,  
 Are but as poets' seasons when they  
 flower,  
 Yet oceans daily gaining on the land,  
 Have ebb and flow conditioning their  
 march,  
 And slow and sure comes up the golden  
 year.  
 'When wealth no more shall rest in  
 mounded heaps,  
 But smit with freer light shall slowly  
 melt  
 In many streams to fatten lower lands,

And light shall spread, and man be liker  
 man  
 Thro' all the season of the golden year.  
 'Shall eagles not be eagles? wrens be  
 wrens?  
 If all the world were falcons, what of  
 that?  
 The wonder of the eagle were the less,  
 But he not less the eagle. Happy days  
 Roll onward, leading up the golden year.  
 'Fly, happy happy sails, and bear the  
 Press;  
 Fly happy with the mission of the Cross;  
 Knit land to land, and blowing haven-  
 ward  
 With silks, and fruits, and spices, clear  
 of toll,  
 Enrich the markets of the golden year.  
 'But we grow old. Ah! when shall  
 all men's good  
 Be each man's rule, and universal Peace  
 Lie like a shaft of light across the land,  
 And like a lane of beams athwart the  
 sea,  
 Thro' all the circle of the golden year?'  
 Thus far he flow'd, and ended; where-  
 upon  
 'Ah, folly!' in mimic cadence answer'd  
 James—  
 'Ah, folly! for it lies so far away,  
 Not in our time, nor in our children's  
 time,  
 'Tis like the second world to us that  
 live;  
 'Twere all as one to fix our hopes on  
 Heaven  
 As on this vision of the golden year.'  
 With that he struck his staff against  
 the rocks  
 And broke it,— James,— you know him,  
 — old, but full  
 Of force and choler, and firm upon his  
 feet,  
 And like an oaken stock in winter woods,  
 O'erflourish'd with the hoary clematis:  
 Then added, all in heat:  
 'What stuff is this!  
 Old writers push'd the happy season  
 back,—  
 The more fools they,— we forward:  
 dreamers both:  
 You most, that in an age, when every  
 hour

Must sweat her sixty minutes to the death,  
 Live on, God love us, as if the seedsman,  
 rapt  
 Upon the teeming harvest, should not plunge  
 His hand into the bag: but well I know  
 That unto him who works, and feels he works,  
 This same grand year is ever at the doors.  
 He spoke; and, high above, I heard them blast  
 The steep slate-quarry, and the great echo flap  
 And buffet round the hills, from bluff to bluff.

ULYSSES.

It little profits that an idle king,  
 By this still hearth, among these barren crags,  
 Match'd with an aged wife, I mete and dole  
 Unequal laws unto a savage race,  
 That hoard, and sleep, and feed, and know not me.  
 I cannot rest from travel: I will drink  
 Life to the lees: all times I have enjoy'd  
 Greatly, have suffer'd greatly, both with those  
 That loved me, and alone; on shore, and when  
 Thro' scudding drifts the rainy Hyades  
 Vext the dim sea: I am become a name;  
 For always roaming with a hungry heart  
 Much have I seen and known: cities of men,  
 And manners, climates, councils, governments,  
 Myself not least, but honour'd of them all;  
 And drunk delight of battle with my peers,  
 Far on the ringing plains of windy Troy.  
 I am a part of all that I have met;  
 Yet all experience is an arch wherethro'  
 Gleams that untravell'd world, whose margin fades  
 For ever and for ever when I move.  
 How dull it is to pause, to make an end,

To rust unburnish'd, not to shine in use!  
 As tho' to breathe were life. Life piled on life  
 Were all too little, and of one to me  
 Little remains: but every hour is saved  
 From that eternal silence, something more,  
 A bringer of new things; and vile it were  
 For some three suns to store and hoard myself,  
 And this gray spirit yearning in desire  
 To follow knowledge like a sinking star,  
 Beyond the utmost bound of human thought.  
 This is my son, mine own Telemachus,  
 To whom I leave the sceptre and the isle—  
 Well-loved of me, discerning to fulfil  
 This labour, by slow prudence to make mild  
 A rugged people, and thro' soft degrees  
 Subdue them to the useful and the good.  
 Most blameless is he, centred in the sphere  
 Of common duties, decent not to fail  
 In offices of tenderness, and pay  
 Meet adoration to my household gods,  
 When I am gone. He works his work,  
 I mine.  
 There lies the port; the vessel puffs her sail:  
 There gloom the dark broad seas. My mariners,  
 Souls that have toil'd, and wrought, and thought with me—  
 That ever with a frolic welcome took  
 The thunder and the sunshine, and opposed  
 Free hearts, free foreheads—you and I are old;  
 Old age hath yet his honour and his toil;  
 Death closes all: but something ere the end,  
 Some work of noble note, may yet be done,  
 Not unbecoming men that strove with Gods.  
 The lights begin to twinkle from the rocks:  
 The long day wanes; the slow moon climbs: the deep  
 Moans round with many voices. Come, my friends,

'Tis not too late to seek a newer world.  
 Push off, and sitting well in order smite  
 The sounding furrows; for my purpose  
 holds  
 To sail beyond the sunset, and the baths  
 Of all the western stars, until I die.  
 It may be that the gulfs will wash us  
 down:  
 It may be we shall touch the Happy Isles,  
 And see the great Achilles, whom we  
 knew.  
 Tho' much is taken, much abides; and  
 tho'  
 We are not now that strength which in  
 old days  
 Moved earth and heaven; that which we  
 are, we are;  
 One equal temper of heroic hearts,  
 Made weak by time and fate, but strong  
 in will  
 To strive, to seek, to find, and not to yield.

## TITHONUS.

THE woods decay, the woods decay and  
 fall,  
 The vapours weep their burthen to the  
 ground,  
 Man comes and tills the field and lies  
 beneath,  
 And after many a summer dies the swan.  
 Me only cruel immortality  
 Consumes: I wither slowly in thine arms,  
 Here at the quiet limit of the world,  
 A white-hair'd shadow roaming like a  
 dream  
 The ever-silent spaces of the East,  
 Far-folded mists, and gleaming halls of  
 morn.

Alas! for this gray shadow, once a  
 man—  
 So glorious in his beauty and thy choice,  
 Who madest him thy chosen, that he  
 seem'd  
 To his great heart none other than a  
 God!  
 I ask'd thee, 'Give me immortality.'  
 Then didst thou grant mine asking with  
 a smile,  
 Like wealthy men who care not how they  
 give.

But thy strong Hours indignant work'd  
 their wills,  
 And beat me down and marr'd and  
 wasted me,  
 And tho' they could not end me, left me  
 maim'd  
 To dwell in presence of immortal youth,  
 Immortal age beside immortal youth,  
 And all I was, in ashes. Can thy love,  
 Thy beauty, make amends, tho' even  
 now,  
 Close over us, the silver star, thy guide,  
 Shines in those tremulous eyes that fill  
 with tears  
 To hear me? Let me go: take back thy  
 gift:  
 Why should a man desire in any way  
 To vary from the kindly race of men,  
 Or pass beyond the goal of ordinance  
 Where all should pause, as is most meet  
 for all?

A soft air fans the cloud apart; there  
 comes  
 A glimpse of that dark world where I  
 was born.  
 Once more the old mysterious glimmer  
 steals  
 From thy pure brows, and from thy  
 shoulders pure,  
 And bosom beating with a heart renew'd.  
 Thy cheek begins to redden thro' the  
 gloom,  
 Thy sweet eyes brighten slowly close to  
 mine,  
 Ere yet they blind the stars, and the wild  
 team  
 Which love thee, yearning for thy yoke,  
 arise,  
 And shake the darkness from their  
 loosen'd manes,  
 And beat the twilight into flakes of fire.

Lo! ever thus thou growest beautiful  
 In silence, then before thine answer  
 given  
 Departest, and thy tears are on my  
 cheek.

Why wilt thou ever scare me with thy  
 tears,  
 And make me tremble lest a saying  
 learnt,

In days far-off, on that dark earth, be true ?

'The Gods themselves cannot recall their gifts.'

Ay me! ay me! with what another heart

In days far-off, and with what other eyes I used to watch—if I be he that watch'd—  
The lucid outline forming round thee;  
saw

The dim curls kindle into sunny rings;  
Changed with thy mystic change, and felt my blood

Glow with the glow that slowly crimson'd all

Thy presence and thy portals, while I lay,

Mouth, forehead, eyelids, growing dewy-warm

With kisses balmier than half-opening buds

Of April, and could hear the lips that kiss'd

Whispering I knew not what of wild and sweet,

Like that strange song I heard Apollo sing,

While I lion like a mist rose into towers.

Yet hold me not for ever in thine East:  
How can my nature longer mix with thine ?

Coldly thy rosy shadows bathe me, cold  
Are all thy lights, and cold my wrinkled feet

Upon thy glimmering thresholds, when the steam

Floats up from those dim fields about the homes

Of happy men that have the power to die,

And grassy barrows of the happier dead.

Release me, and restore me to the ground;

Thou seest all things, thou wilt see my grave:

Thou wilt renew thy beauty morn by morn;

I earth in earth forget these empty courts,  
And thee returning on thy silver wheels.

### LOCKSLEY HALL.

COMRADES, leave me here a little, while as yet 'tis early morn:  
Leave me here, and when you want me, sound upon the bugle-horn.

'Tis the place, and all around it, as of old, the curlews call,  
Dreary gleams about the moorland flying over Locksley Hall;

Locksley Hall, that in the distance overlooks the sandy tracts,  
And the hollow ocean-ridges roaring into cataracts.

Many a night from yonder ivied casement, ere I went to rest,  
Did I look on great Orion sloping slowly to the West.

Many a night I saw the Pleiads, rising thro' the mellow shade,  
Glitter like a swarm of fire-flies tangled in a silver braid.

Here about the beach I wander'd, nourishing a youth sublime  
With the fairy tales of science, and the long result of Time;

When the centuries behind me like a fruitful land reposed;  
When I clung to all the present for the promise that it closed:

When I dipt into the future far as human eye could see;  
Saw the Vision of the world, and all the wonder that would be.—

In the Spring a fuller crimson comes upon the robin's breast;  
In the Spring the wanton lapwing gets himself another crest;

In the Spring a livelier iris changes on the burnish'd dove;  
In the Spring a young man's fancy lightly turns to thoughts of love.

Then her cheek was pale and thinner than should be for one so young,  
And her eyes on all my motions with a mute observance hung.

And I said, 'My cousin Amy, speak, and speak the truth to me,  
Trust me, cousin, all the current of my being sets to thee.'

On her pallid cheek and forehead came a color and a light,  
As I have seen the rosy red flushing in the northern night.

And she turn'd — her bosom shaken with a sudden storm of sighs —  
All the spirit deeply dawning in the dark of hazel eyes —

Saying, 'I have hid my feelings, fearing they should do me wrong ;'  
Saying, 'Dost thou love me, cousin ?' weeping, 'I have loved thee long.'

Love took up the glass of Time, and turn'd it in his glowing hands;  
Every moment, lightly shaken, ran itself in golden sands.

Love took up the harp of Life, and smote on all the chords with might;  
Smote the chord of Self, that, trembling, pass'd in music out of sight.

Many a morning on the moorland did we hear the cospes ring,  
And her whisper throng'd my pulses with the fullness of the Spring.

Many an evening by the waters did we watch the stately ships,  
And our spirits rush'd together at the touching of the lips.

O my cousin, shallow-hearted ! O my Amy, mine no more !  
O the dreary, dreary moorland ! O the barren, barren shore !

Falser than all fancy fathoms, falser than all songs have sung,  
Puppet to a father's threat, and servile to a shrewish tongue !

Is it well to wish thee happy ? — having known me — to decline  
On a range of lower feelings and a narrower heart than mine !

Yet it shall be : thou shalt lower to his level day by day,  
What is fine within thee growing coarse to sympathise with clay.

As the husband is, the wife is : thou art mated with a clown,  
And the grossness of his nature will have weight to drag thee down.

He will hold thee, when his passion shall have spent its novel force,  
Something better than his dog, a little dearer than his horse.

What is this ? his eyes are heavy : think not they are glazed with wine.  
Go to him : it is thy duty : kiss him : take his hand in thine.



It may be my lord is weary, that his brain is overwrought :  
Soothe him with thy finer faucies, touch him with thy lighter thought.

He will answer to the purpose, easy things to understand —  
Better thou wert dead before me, tho' I slew thee with my hand !

Better thou and I were lying, hidden from the heart's disgrace,  
Roll'd in one another's arms, and silent in a last embrace.

Cursed be the social wants that sin against the strength of youth !  
Cursed be the social lies that warp us from the living truth !

Cursed be the sickly forms that err from honest Nature's rule !  
Cursed be the gold that gilds the straiten'd forehead of the fool !

Well — 'tis well that I should bluster ! — Hadst thou less unworthy proved —  
Would to God — for I had loved thee more than ever wife was loved.

Am I mad, that I should cherish that which bears but bitter fruit ?  
I will pluck it from my bosom, tho' my heart be at the root.

Never, tho' my mortal summers to such length of years should come  
As the many-winter'd crow that leads the clanging rookery home.

Where is comfort ? in division of the records of the mind ?  
Can I part her from herself, and love her, as I knew her, kind ?

I remember one that perish'd : sweetly did she speak and move :  
Such a one do I remember, whom to look at was to love.

Can I think of her as dead, and love her for the love she bore ?  
No — she never loved me truly : love is love for evermore.

Comfort ? comfort scorn'd of devils ! this is truth the poet sings,  
That a sorrow's crown of sorrow is remembering happier things.

Drug thy memories, lest thou learn it, lest thy heart be put to proof,  
In the dead unhappy night, and when the rain is on the roof.

Like a dog, he hunts in dreams, and thou art staring at the wall,  
Where the dying night-lamp flickers, and the shadows rise and fall.

Then a hand shall pass before thee, pointing to his drunken sleep,  
To thy widow'd marriage-pillows, to the tears that thou wilt weep.

Thou shalt hear the 'Never, never,' whisper'd by the phantom years,  
And a song from out the distance in the ringing of thine ears ;

And an eye shall vex thee, looking ancient kindness on thy pain.  
Turn thee, turn thee on thy pillow : get thee to thy rest again.

Nay, but Nature brings thee solace ; for a tender voice will cry.  
'Tis a purer life than thine ; a lip to drain thy trouble dry.

Baby lips will laugh me down: my latest rival brings thee rest.  
Baby fingers, waxen touches, press me from the mother's breast.

O, the child too clothes the father with a dearness not his due.  
Half is thine and half is his: it will be worthy of the two.

O, I see thee old and formal, fitted to thy petty part,  
With a little hoard of maxims preaching down a daughter's heart.

'They were dangerous guides the feelings — she herself was not exempt —  
Truly, she herself had suffer'd' — Perish in thy self-contempt!

Overlive it — lower yet — be happy! wherefore should I care?  
I myself must mix with action, lest I wither by despair.

What is that which I should turn to, lighting upon days like these?  
Every door is barr'd with gold, and opens but to golden keys.

Every gate is throng'd with suitors, all the markets overflow.  
I have but an angry fancy: what is that which I should do?

I had been content to perish, falling on the foeman's ground,  
When the ranks are roll'd in vapour, and the winds are laid with sound.

But the jingling of the guinea helps the hurt that Honour feels,  
And the nations do but murmur, snarling at each other's heels.

Can I but relive in sadness? I will turn that earlier page.  
Hide me from my deep emotion, O thou wondrous Mother-Age!

Make me feel the wild pulsation that I felt before the strife,  
When I heard my days before me, and the tumult of my life;

Yearning for the large excitement that the coming years would yield,  
Eager-hearted as a boy when first he leaves his father's field,

And at night along the dusky highway near and nearer drawn,  
Sees in heaven the light of London flaring like a dreary dawn;

And his spirit leaps within him to be gone before him then,  
Underneath the light he looks at, in among the throngs of men:

Men, my brothers, men the workers, ever reaping something new:  
That which they have done but earnest of the things that they shall do:

For I dipt into the future, far as human eye could see,  
Saw the Vision of the world, and all the wonder that would be;

Saw the heavens fill with commerce, argosies of magic sails,  
Pilots of the purple twilight, dropping down with costly bales;

Heard the heavens fill with shouting, and there rain'd a ghastly dew  
From the nations' airy navies grappling in the central blue;

Far along the world-wide whisper of the south-wind rushing warm,  
With the standards of the peoples plunging thro' the thunder-storm;

Till the war-drum throb'd no longer, and the battle-flags were furl'd  
In the Parliament of man, the Federation of the world.

There the common sense of most shall hold a fretful realm in awe,  
And the kindly earth shall slumber, lapt in universal law.

So I triumph'd ere my passion sweeping thro' me left me dry,  
Left me with the palsied heart, and left me with the jaundiced eye;

Eye, to which all order festers, all things here are out of joint:  
Science moves, but slowly slowly, creeping on from point to point:

Slowly comes a hungry people, as a lion creeping nigher,  
Glares at one that nods and winks behind a slowly-dying fire.

Yet I doubt not thro' the ages one increasing purpose runs,  
And the thoughts of men are widen'd with the process of the suns.

What is that to him that reaps not harvest of his youthful joys,  
Tho' the deep heart of existence beat for ever like a boy's?

Knowledge comes, but wisdom lingers, and I linger on the shore,  
And the individual withers, and the world is more and more.

Knowledge comes, but wisdom lingers, and he bears a laden breast,  
Full of sad experience, moving toward the stillness of his rest.

Hark, my merry comrades call me, sounding on the bugle-horn,  
They to whom my foolish passion were a target for their scorn:

Shall it not be scorn to me to harp on such a moulder'd string?  
I am shamed thro' all my nature to have loved so slight a thing.

Weakness to be wroth with weakness! woman's pleasure, woman's pain—  
Nature made them blinder motions bounded in a shallower brain:

Woman is the lesser man, and all thy passions, match'd with mine,  
Are as moonlight unto sunlight, and as water unto wine—

Here at least, where nature sickens, nothing. Ah, for some retreat  
Deep in yonder shining Orient, where my life began to beat;

Where in wild Mahratta-battle fell my father evil-starr'd;—  
I was left a trampled orphan, and a selfish uncle's ward.

Or to burst all links of habit—there to wander far away,  
On from island unto island at the gateways of the day.

Larger constellations burning, mellow moons and happy skies,  
Breadths of tropic shade and palms in cluster, knots of Paradise.

Never comes the trader, never floats an European flag,  
Slides the bird o'er lustrous woodland, swings the trailer from the crag;

Droops the heavy-blossom'd bower, hangs the heavy-fruited tree —  
Summer isles of Eden lying in dark-purple spheres of sea.

There methinks would be enjoyment more than in this march of mind,  
In the steamship, in the railway, in the thoughts that shake mankind.

There the passions cramp'd no longer shall have scope and breathing space;  
I will take some savage woman, she shall rear my dusky race.

Iron-jointed, supple-sinew'd, they shall dive, and they shall run,  
Catch the wild goat by the hair, and hurl their lances in the sun;

Whistle back the parrot's call, and leap the rainbows of the brooks,  
Not with blinded eyesight poring over miserable books —

Fool, again the dream, the fancy! but I *know* my words are wild,  
But I count the gray barbarian lower than the Christian child.

I, to herd with narrow foreheads, vacant of our glorious gains,  
Like a beast with lower pleasures, like a beast with lower pains!

Mated with a squalid savage — what to me were sun or clime?  
I the heir of all the ages, in the foremost files of time —

I that rather held it better men should perish one by one,  
Than that earth should stand at gaze like Joshua's moon in Ajalon!

Not in vain the distance beacons. Forward, forward let us range,  
Let the great world spin for ever down the ringing grooves of change.

Thro' the shadow of the globe we sweep into the younger day:  
Better fifty years of Europe than a cycle of Cathay.

Mother-Age (for mine I knew not) help me as when life begun:  
Rift the hills, and roll the waters, flash the lightnings, weigh the Sun.

O, I see the crescent promise of my spirit hath not set.  
Ancient founts of inspiration well thro' all my fancy yet.

Howsoever these things be, a long farewell to Locksley Hall!  
Now for me the woods may wither, now for me the roof-tree fall.

Comes a vapour from the margin, blackening over heath and holt,  
Cramming all the blast before it, in its breast a thunderbolt.

Let it fall on Locksley Hall, with rain or hail, or fire or snow;  
For the mighty wind arises, roaring seaward, and I go.

## GODIVA.

*I waited for the train at Coventry;  
I hung with grooms and porters on the  
bridge,  
To watch the three tall spires; and there  
I shaped*

*The city's ancient legend into this:—*

Not only we, the latest seed of Time,  
New men, that in the flying of a wheel  
Cry down the past, not only we, that prate  
Of rights and wrongs, have loved the  
people well,

And loathed to see them overtax'd; but  
she

Did more, and underwent, and overcame,  
The woman of a thousand summers back,  
Godiva, wife to that grim Earl, who ruled  
In Coventry: for when he laid a tax  
Upon his town, and all the mothers  
brought

Their children, clamouring, 'If we pay,  
we starve!'

She sought her lord, and found him,  
where he strode

About the hall, among his dogs, alone,  
His beard a foot before him, and his hair  
A yard behind. She told him of their  
tears,

And pray'd him, 'If they pay this tax,  
they starve.'

Whereat he stared, replying, half-amazed,  
'You would not let your little finger ache  
For such as *these?*'— 'But I would die,'  
said she.

He laugh'd, and swore by Peter and by  
Paul:

Then fillip'd at the diamond in her ear;  
'Oh ay, ay, ay, you talk!'— 'Alas!' she  
said,

'But prove me what it is I would not do.'  
And from a heart as rough as Esau's  
hand,

He answer'd, 'Ride you naked thro' the  
town,

And I repeal it;' and nodding, as in  
scorn,

He parted, with great strides among his  
dogs.

So left alone, the passions of her mind,  
As winds from all the compass shift and  
blow,

Made war upon each other for an hour,  
Till pity won. She sent a herald forth,  
And bade him cry, with sound of trumpet,  
all

The hard condition; but that she would  
loose

The people: therefore, as they loved her  
well,

From then till noon no foot should pace  
the street,

No eye look down, she passing; but that  
all

Should keep within, door shut, and win-  
dow barr'd.

Then fled she to her inmost bower,  
and there

Unclasp'd the wedded eagles of her belt,  
The grim Earl's gift; but ever at a breath  
She linger'd, looking like a summer  
moon

Half-dipt in cloud: anon she shook her  
head,

And shower'd the rippled ringlets to her  
knee;

Unclad herself in haste; adown the stair  
Stole on; and, like a creeping sunbeam,  
slid

From pillar unto pillar, until she reach'd  
The gateway; there she found her pal-  
frey trapt

In purple blazon'd with armorial gold.

Then she rode forth, clothed on with  
chastity:

The deep air listen'd round her as she  
rode,

And all the low wind hardly breathed for  
fear.

The little wide-mouth'd heads upon the  
spout

Had cunning eyes to see: the barking  
cur

Made her cheek flame: her palfrey's foot-  
fall shot

Light horrors thro' her pulses: the blind  
walls

Were full of chinks and holes; and over-  
head

Fantastic gables, crowding, stared: but  
she

Not less thro' all bore up, till, last, she  
saw

The white-flower'd elder-thicket from the  
field

Gleam thro' the Gothic archway in the wall.

Then she rode back, clothed on with chastity:

And one low churl, compact of thankless earth,

The fatal byword of all years to come,  
Boring a little auger-hole in fear,

Peep'd — but his eyes, before they had their will,

Were shrivell'd into darkness in his head,

And dropt before him. So the Powers, who wait

On noble deeds, cancell'd a sense mis-used;

And she, that knew not, pass'd: and all at once,

With twelve great shocks of sound, the shameless noon

Was clash'd and hammer'd from a hundred towers,

One after one: but even then she gain'd Her bower; whence reissuing, robed and crown'd,

To meet her lord, she took the tax away

And built herself an everlasting name.

### THE DAY-DREAM.

#### PROLOGUE.

O LADY FLORA, let me speak:

A pleasant hour has pass'd away  
While, dreaming on your damask cheek,

The dewy sister-eyelids lay.  
As by the lattice you reclined,

I went thro' many wayward moods  
To see you dreaming — and, behind,

A summer crisp with shining woods.  
And I too dream'd, until at last

Across my fancy, brooding warm,  
The reflex of a legend past,

And loosely settled into form.

And would you have the thought I had,  
And see the vision that I saw,

Then take the broidery-frame, and add  
A crimson to the quaint Macaw,

And I will tell it. Turn your face,  
Nor look with that too-earnest eye —

The rhymes are dazzled from their place  
And order'd words asunder fly.

### THE SLEEPING PALACE.

#### I.

THE varying year with blade and sheaf  
Clothes and re-clothes the happy plains,

Here rests the sap within the leaf,  
Here stays the blood along the veins.

Faint shadows, vapours lightly curl'd,  
Faint murmurs from the meadows

come,  
Like hints and echoes of the world  
To spirits folded in the womb.

#### II.

Soft lustre bathes the range of urns  
On every slanting terrace-lawn.

The fountain to his place returns  
Deep in the garden lake withdrawn.

Here droops the banner on the tower,  
On the hall-hearths the festal fires,

The peacock in his laurel bower,  
The parrot in his gilded wires.

#### III.

Roof-haunting martins warm their eggs:  
In these, in those the life is stay'd.

The mantles from the golden pegs  
Droop sleepily: no sound is made,

Not even of a gnat that sings.

More like a picture seemeth all  
Than those old portraits of old kings,  
That watch the sleepers from the wall.

#### IV.

Here sits the Butler with a flask  
Between his knees, half-drain'd; and there

The wrinkled steward at his task,  
The maid-of-honour blooming fair;

The page has caught her hand in his:  
Her lips are sever'd as to speak:

His own are pouted to a kiss:  
The blush is fix'd upon her cheek.

#### V.

Till all the hundred summers pass,  
The beams, that thro' the Oriel shine,

Make prisms in every carven glass,  
And beaker brimm'd with noble wine.

Each baron at the banquet sleeps,  
Grave faces gather'd in a ring.



His state the king reposing keeps.  
He must have been a jovial king.

## VI.

All round a hedge upshoots, and shows  
At distance like a little wood;  
Thorns, ivies, woodbine, mistletoes,  
And grapes with bunches red as blood;  
All creeping plants, a wall of green  
Close-matted, bur and brake and briar,  
And glimpsing over these, just seen,  
High up, the topmost palace spire.

## VII.

When will the hundred summers die,  
And thought and time be born again,  
And newer knowledge, drawing nigh,  
Bring truth that sways the soul of men?  
Here all things in their place remain,  
As all were order'd, ages since.  
Come, Care and Pleasure, Hope and Pain,  
And bring the fated fairy Prince.

## THE SLEEPING BEAUTY.

## I.

YEAR after year unto her feet,  
She lying on her couch alone,  
Across the purple coverlet,  
The maiden's jet-black hair has grown,  
On either side her tranced form  
Forth streaming from a braid of pearl:  
The slumbrous light is rich and warm,  
And moves not on the rounded curl.

## II.

The silk star-broider'd coverlid  
Unto her limbs itself doth mould  
Languidly ever; and, amid  
Her full black ringlets downward  
roll'd,  
Glows forth each softly-shadow'd arm  
With bracelets of the diamond bright:  
Her constant beauty doth inform  
Stillness with love, and day with light.

## III.

She sleeps: her breathings are not heard  
In palace chambers far apart.  
The fragrant tresses are not stirr'd  
That lie upon her charmed heart.

She sleeps: on either hand upswells  
The gold-fringed pillow lightly prest:  
She sleeps, nor dreams, but ever dwells  
A perfect form in perfect rest.

## THE ARRIVAL.

## I.

ALL precious things, discover'd late,  
To those that seek them issue forth;  
For love in sequel works with fate,  
And draws the veil from hidden worth.  
He travels far from other skies —  
His mantle glitters on the rocks —  
A fairy Prince, with joyful eyes,  
And lighter-footed than the fox.

## II.

The bodies and the bones of those  
That strove in other days to pass,  
Are wither'd in the thorny close,  
Or scatter'd blanching on the grass.  
He gazes on the silent dead:  
'They perish'd in their daring deeds.'  
This proverb flashes thro' his head,  
'The many fail: the one succeeds.'

## III.

He comes, scarce knowing what he  
seeks:  
He breaks the hedge: he enters  
there:  
The colour flies into his cheeks:  
He trusts to light on something fair;  
For all his life the charm did talk  
About his path, and hover near  
With words of promise in his walk,  
And whisper'd voices at his ear.

## IV.

More close and close his footsteps  
wind:  
The Magic Music in his heart  
Beats quick and quicker, till he find  
The quiet chamber far apart.  
His spirit flutters like a lark,  
He stoops — to kiss her — on his  
knee.  
'Love, if thy tresses be so dark,  
How dark those hidden eyes must  
be!'

## THE REVIVAL.

## I.

A TOUCH, a kiss! the charm was snapt.  
 There rose a noise of striking clocks,  
 And feet that ran, and doors that clapt,  
 And barking dogs, and crowing cocks;  
 A fuller light illumined all,  
 A breeze thro' all the garden swept,  
 A sudden hubbub shook the hall,  
 And sixty feet the fountain leapt.

## II.

The hedge broke in, the banner blew,  
 The butler drank, the steward scrawl'd,  
 The fire shot up, the martin flew,  
 The parrot scream'd, the peacock  
 squall'd,  
 The maid and page renew'd their strife,  
 The palace bang'd, and buzz'd and  
 clackt,  
 And all the long-pent stream of life  
 Dash'd downward in a cataract.

## III.

And last with these the king awoke,  
 And in his chair himself uprear'd,  
 And yawn'd, and rubb'd his face, and  
 spoke,  
 'By holy rood, a royal beard!  
 How say you? we have slept, my lords.  
 My beard has grown into my lap.'  
 The barons swore, with many words,  
 'Twas but an after-dinner's nap.

## IV.

'Pardy,' return'd the king, 'but still  
 My joints are somewhat stiff or so.  
 My lord, and shall we pass the bill  
 I mention'd half an hour ago?'  
 The chancellor, sedate and vain,  
 In courteous words return'd reply:  
 But dallied with his golden chain,  
 And, smiling, put the question by.

## THE DEPARTURE.

## I.

AND on her lover's arm she leant,  
 And round her waist she felt it fold,

And far across the hills they went  
 In that new world which is the old:  
 Across the hills, and far away  
 Beyond their utmost purple rim,  
 And deep into the dying day  
 The happy princess follow'd him.

## II.

'I'd sleep another hundred years,  
 O love, for such another kiss;'  
 'O wake for ever, love,' she hears,  
 'O love, 'twas such as this and this.'  
 And o'er them many a sliding star,  
 And many a merry wind was borne,  
 And, stream'd thro' many a golden bar,  
 The twilight melted into morn.

## III.

'O eyes long laid in happy sleep!  
 'O happy sleep, that lightly fled!'  
 'O happy kiss, that woke thy sleep!'  
 'O love, thy kiss would wake the dead!'  
 And o'er them many a flowing range  
 Of vapour buoy'd the crescent-bark,  
 And, rapt thro' many a rosy change,  
 The twilight died into the dark.

## IV.

'A hundred summers! can it be?  
 And whither goest thou, tell me where?'  
 'O seek my father's court with me,  
 For there are greater wonders there.'  
 And o'er the hills, and far away  
 Beyond their utmost purple rim,  
 Beyond the night, across the day,  
 Thro' all the world she follow'd him.

## MORAL.

## I.

So, Lady Flora, take my lay,  
 And if you find no moral there,  
 Go, look in any glass and say,  
 What moral is in being fair.  
 Oh, to what uses shall we put  
 The wildweed-flower that simply blows?  
 And is there any moral shut  
 Within the bosom of the rose?

## II.

But any man that walks the mead,  
 In bud, or blade, or bloom, may find,

According as his humours lead,  
 A meaning suited to his mind.  
 And liberal applications lie  
 In Art like Nature, dearest friend;  
 So 'twere to cramp its use, if I  
 Should hook it to some useful end.

## L'ENVOI.

## I.

YOU shake your head. A random string  
 Your finer female sense offends.  
 Well—were it not a pleasant thing  
 To fall asleep with all one's friends;  
 To pass with all our social ties  
 To silence from the paths of men;  
 And every hundred years to rise  
 And learn the world, and sleep again;  
 To sleep thro' terms of mighty wars,  
 And wake on science grown to more,  
 On secrets of the brain, the stars,  
 As wild as aught of fairy lore;  
 And all that else the years will show,  
 The Poet-forms of stronger hours,  
 The vast Republics that may grow,  
 The Federations and the Powers;  
 Titanic forces taking birth  
 In divers seasons, divers climes;  
 For we are Ancients of the earth,  
 And in the morning of the times.

## II.

So sleeping, so aroused from sleep  
 Thro' sunny decads new and strange,  
 Or gay quinqueniads would we reap  
 The flower and quintessence of change.

## III.

Ah, yet would I—and would I might!  
 So much your eyes my fancy take—  
 Be still the first to leap to light  
 That I might kiss those eyes awake!  
 For, am I right, or am I wrong,  
 To choose your own you did not care;  
 You'd have *my* moral from the song,  
 And I will take my pleasure there:  
 And, am I right or am I wrong,  
 My fancy, ranging thro' and thro',  
 To search a meaning for the song,  
 Perforce will still revert to you;  
 Nor finds a closer truth than this  
 All-graceful head, so richly curl'd,

And evermore a costly kiss  
 The prelude to some brighter world.

## IV.

For since the time when Adam first  
 Embraced his Eve in happy hour,  
 And every bird of Eden burst  
 In carol, every bud to flower,  
 What eyes, like thine, have waken'd  
 hopes,  
 What lips, like thine, so sweetly  
 join'd?  
 Where on the double rosebud droops  
 The fullness of the pensive mind;  
 Which all too dearly self-involved,  
 Yet sleeps a dreamless sleep to me;  
 A sleep by kisses undissolved,  
 That lets thee neither hear nor see:  
 But break it. In the name of wife,  
 And in the rights that name may  
 give,  
 Are clasp'd the moral of thy life,  
 And that for which I care to live.

## EPILOGUE.

So, Lady Flora, take my lay,  
 And, if you find a meaning there,  
 O whisper to your glass, and say,  
 'What wonder, if he thinks me fair?'  
 What wonder I was all unwise,  
 To shape the song for your delight  
 Like long-tail'd birds of Paradise  
 That float thro' Heaven, and cannot  
 light?  
 Or old-world trains, upheld at court  
 By Cupid-boys of blooming hue—  
 But take it—earnest wed with sport,  
 And either sacred unto you.

## AMPHION.

My father left a park to me,  
 But it is wild and barren,  
 A garden too with scarce a tree,  
 And waster than a warren:  
 Yet say the neighbours when they call,  
 It is not bad but good land,  
 And in it is the germ of all  
 That grows within the woodland.  
 O had I lived when song was great  
 In days of old Amphion,

And ta'en my fiddle to the gate,  
 Nor cared for seed or scion!  
 And had I lived when song was great,  
 And legs of trees were limber,  
 And ta'en my fiddle to the gate,  
 And fiddled in the timber!

'Tis said he had a tuneful tongue,  
 Such happy intonation,  
 Wherever he sat down and sung  
 He left a small plantation;  
 Wherever in a lonely grove  
 He set up his forlorn pipes,  
 The gouty oak began to move,  
 And flounder into hornpipes.

The mountain stirr'd its bushy crown,  
 And, as tradition teaches,  
 Young ashes pirouetted down  
 Coquetting with young beeches;  
 And briony-vine and ivy-wreath  
 Ran forward to his rhyming,  
 And from the valleys underneath  
 Came little copses climbing.

The linden broke her ranks and rent  
 The woodbine wreaths that bind her,  
 And down the middle, buzz! she went  
 With all her bees behind her:  
 The poplars, in long order due,  
 With cypress promenaded,  
 The shock-head willows two and two  
 By rivers galloped.

Came wet-shod alder from the wave,  
 Came yews, a dismal coterie;  
 Each pluck'd his one foot from the  
 grave  
 Pousetting with a sloe-tree:  
 Old elms came breaking from the vine,  
 The vine stream'd out to follow,  
 And, sweating rosin, plump'd the pine  
 From many a cloudy hollow.

And wasn't it a sight to see,  
 When, ere his song was ended,  
 Like some great landslip, tree by tree,  
 The country-side descended;  
 And shepherds from the mountain-eaves  
 Look'd down, half-pleas'd, half-fright-  
 en'd,  
 As dash'd about the drunken leaves  
 The random sunshine lighten'd!

Oh, nature first was fresh to men,  
 And wanton without measure;  
 So youthful and so flexible then,  
 You moved her at your pleasure.  
 Twang out, my fiddle! shake the twigs!  
 And make her dance attendance;  
 Blow, flute, and stir the stiff-set sprigs,  
 And scirrhous roots and tendons.

'Tis vain! in such a brassy age  
 I could not move a thistle;  
 The very sparrows in the hedge  
 Scarce answer to my whistle;  
 Or at the most, when three-parts-sick  
 With strumming and with scraping,  
 A jackass heehaws from the rick,  
 The passive oxen gaping.

But what is that I hear? a sound  
 Like sleepy counsel pleading;  
 O Lord! — 'tis in my neighbour's ground,  
 The modern Muses reading.  
 They read Botanic Treatises,  
 And Works on Gardening thro' there,  
 And Methods of transplanting trees  
 To look as if they grew there.

The wither'd Misses! how they prose  
 O'er books of travell'd seamen,  
 And show you slips of all that grows  
 From England to Van Diemen.  
 They read in arbours clipt and cut,  
 And alleys, faded places,  
 By squares of tropic summer shut  
 And warm'd in crystal cases.

But these, tho' fed with careful dirt,  
 Are neither green nor sappy;  
 Half-conscious of the garden-squirt,  
 The spindlings look unhappy.  
 Better to me the meanest weed  
 That blows upon its mountain,  
 The vilest herb that runs to seed  
 Beside its native fountain.

And I must work thro' months of toil,  
 And years of cultivation,  
 Upon my proper patch of soil  
 To grow my own plantation.  
 I'll take the showers as they fall,  
 I will not vex my bosom:  
 Enough if at the end of all  
 A little garden blossom.

## ST. AGNES' EVE.

DEEP on the convent-roof the snows  
 Are sparkling to the moon:  
 My breath to heaven like vapour goes:  
 May my soul follow soon!  
 The shadows of the convent-towers  
 Slant down the snowy sward,  
 Still creeping with the creeping hours  
 That lead me to my Lord:  
 Make Thou my spirit pure and clear  
 As aere the frosty skies,  
 Or this first snowdrop of the year  
 That in my bosom lies.

As these white robes are soil'd and dark,  
 To yonder shining ground;  
 As this pale taper's earthly spark,  
 To yonder argent round;  
 So shows my soul before the Lamb,  
 My spirit before Thee;  
 So in mine earthly house I am,  
 To that I hope to be.  
 Break up the heavens, O Lord! and far,  
 Thro' all yon starlight keen,  
 Draw me, thy bride, a glittering star,  
 In raiment white and clean.

He lifts me to the golden doors;  
 The flashes come and go;  
 All heaven bursts her starry floors,  
 And strows her lights below,  
 And deepens on and up! the gates  
 Roll back, and far within  
 For me the Heavenly Bridegroom waits,  
 To make me pure of sin.  
 The sabbaths of Eternity,  
 One sabbath deep and wide —  
 A light upon the shining sea —  
 The Bridegroom with his bride!

## SIR GALAHAD.

My good blade carves the casques of men,  
 My tough lance thrusteth sure,  
 My strength is as the strength of ten,  
 Because my heart is pure.  
 The shattering trumpet shrilleth high,  
 The hard brands shiver on the steel,  
 The splinter'd spear-shafts crack and fly,  
 The horse and rider reel:

They reel, they roll in clanging lists,  
 And when the tide of combat stands,  
 Perfume and flowers fall in showers,  
 That lightly rain from ladies' hands.

How sweet are looks that ladies bend  
 On whom their favours fall!  
 For them I battle till the end,  
 To save from shame and thrall:  
 But all my heart is drawn above,  
 My knees are bow'd in crypt and  
 shrine:

I never felt the kiss of love,  
 Nor maiden's hand in mine.  
 More bounteous aspects on me beam,  
 Me mightier transports move and  
 thrill;

So keep I fair thro' faith and prayer  
 A virgin heart in work and will.

When down the stormy crescent goes,  
 A light before me swims,  
 Between dark stems the forest glows,  
 I hear a noise of hymns:  
 Then by some secret shrine I ride;  
 I hear a voice but none are there;  
 The stalls are void, the doors are wide,  
 The tapers burning fair.  
 Fair gleams the snowy altar-cloth,  
 The silver vessels sparkle clean,  
 The shrill bell rings, the censer swings,  
 And solemn chaunts resound between.

Sometimes on lonely mountain-meres  
 I find a magic bark;  
 I leap on board: no helmsman steers:  
 I float till all is dark.  
 A gentle sound, an awful light!  
 Three angels bear the holy Grail:  
 With folded feet, in stoles of white,  
 On sleeping wings they sail.  
 Ah, blessed vision! blood of God!  
 My spirit beats her mortal bars,  
 As down dark tides the glory slides,  
 And star-like mingles with the stars.

When on my goodly charger borne  
 Thro' dreaming towns I go,  
 The cock crows ere the Christmas morn,  
 The streets are dumb with snow.  
 The tempest crackles on the leads,  
 And, ringing, springs from brand and  
 mail;

But o'er the dark a glory spreads,  
And gilds the driving hail.  
I leave the plain, I climb the height;  
No branchy thicket shelter yields;  
But blessed forms in whistling storms  
Fly o'er waste fens and windy fields.

A maiden knight — to me is given  
Such hope, I know not fear;  
I yearn to breathe the airs of heaven  
That often meet me here.  
I muse on joy that will not cease,  
Pure spaces clothed in living beams,  
Pure lilies of eternal peace,  
Whose odours haunt my dreams;  
And, stricken by an angel's hand,  
This mortal armour that I wear,  
This weight and size, this heart and eyes,  
Are touch'd, are turn'd to finest air.

The clouds are broken in the sky,  
And thro' the mountain-walls  
A rolling organ-harmony  
Swells up, and shakes and falls.  
Then move the trees, the copses nod,  
Wings flutter, voices hover clear:  
'O just and faithful knight of God!  
Ride on! the prize is near.'  
So pass I hostel, hall, and grange;  
By bridge and ford, by park and pale,  
All-arm'd I ride, whate'er betide,  
Until I find the holy Grail.

## EDWARD GRAY.

SWEET Emma Moreland of yonder town  
Met me walking on yonder way,  
'And have you lost your heart?' she  
said;  
'And are you married yet, Edward  
Gray?'

Sweet Emma Moreland spoke to me:  
Bitterly weeping I turn'd away:  
'Sweet Emma Moreland, love no more  
Can touch the heart of Edward Gray.

'Ellen Adair she loved me well,  
Against her father's and mother's  
will:  
To-day I sat for an hour and wept,  
By Ellen's grave, on the windy hill.

'Shy she was, and I thought her cold;  
Thought her proud, and fled over the  
sea;  
Fill'd I was with folly and spite,  
When Ellen Adair was dying for me.

'Cruel, cruel the words I said!  
Cruelly came they back to-day:  
'You're too slight and fickle,' I said,  
'To trouble the heart of Edward Gray.'

'There I put my face in the grass —  
Whisper'd, "Listen to my despair:  
I repent me of all I did:  
Speak a little, Ellen Adair!"

'Then I took a pencil, and wrote  
On the mossy stone, as I lay,  
'Here lies the body of Ellen Adair;  
And here the heart of Edward Gray!'

'Love may come, and love may go,  
And fly, like a bird, from tree to tree;  
But I will love no more, no more,  
Till Ellen Adair come back to me.

'Bitterly wept I over the stone:  
Bitterly weeping I turn'd away:  
There lies the body of Ellen Adair!  
And there the heart of Edward Gray!'

WILL WATERPROOF'S LYRICAL  
MONOLOGUE.

MADE AT THE COCK.

O PLUMP head-waiter at The Cock,  
To which I most resort,  
How goes the time? 'Tis five o'clock.  
Go fetch a pint of port:  
But let it not be such as that  
You set before chance-comers,  
But such whose father-grape grew fat  
On Lusitanian summers.

No vain libation to the Muse,  
But may she still be kind,  
And whisper lovely words, and use  
Her influence on the mind,  
To make me write my random rhymes,  
Ere they be half-forgotten;  
Nor add and alter, many times,  
Till all be ripe and rotten.



I pledge her, and she comes and dips  
 Her laurel in the wine,  
 And lays it thrice upon my lips,  
 These favour'd lips of mine;  
 Until the charm have power to make  
 New lifeblood warm the bosom,  
 And barren commonplaces break  
 In full and kindly blossom.

I pledge her silent at the board;  
 Her gradual fingers steal  
 And touch upon the master-chord  
 Of all I felt and feel.  
 Old wishes, ghosts of broken plans,  
 And phantom hopes assemble;  
 And that child's heart within the man's  
 Begins to move and tremble.

Thro' many an hour of summer suns,  
 By many pleasant ways,  
 Against its fountain upward runs  
 The current of my days:  
 I kiss the lips I once have kiss'd;  
 The gas-light wavers dimmer;  
 And softly, thro' a vinous mist,  
 My college friendships glimmer.

I grow in worth, and wit, and sense,  
 Unboding critic-pen,  
 Or that eternal want of pence,  
 Which vexes public men,  
 Who hold their hands to all, and cry  
 For that which all deny them—  
 Who sweep the crossings, wet or dry,  
 And all the world go by them.

Ah yet, tho' all the world forsake,  
 Tho' fortune clip my wings,  
 I will not cramp my heart, nor take  
 Half-views of men and things.  
 Let Whig and Tory stir their blood;  
 There must be stormy weather;  
 But for some true result of good  
 All parties work together.

Let there be thistles, there are grapes;  
 If old things, there are new;  
 Ten thousand broken lights and shapes,  
 Yet glimpses of the true.  
 Let riffs be rife in prose and rhyme,  
 We lack not rhymes and reasons,  
 As on this whirligig of Time  
 We circle with the seasons.

This earth is rich in man and maid;  
 With fair horizons bound:  
 This whole wide earth of light and  
 shade  
 Comes out a perfect round.  
 High over roaring Temple-bar,  
 And set in Heaven's third story,  
 I look at all things as they are,  
 But thro' a kind of glory.

Head-waiter, honour'd by the guest  
 Half-mused, or reeling ripe,  
 The pint, you brought me, was the best  
 That ever came from pipe.  
 But tho' the port surpasses praise,  
 My nerves have dealt with stiffer.  
 Is there some magic in the place?  
 Or do my peptics differ?

For since I came to live and learn,  
 No pint of white or red  
 Had ever half the power to turn  
 This wheel within my brain,  
 Which bears a season'd head about,  
 Unsubject to confusion,  
 Tho' soak'd and saturate, out and out,  
 Thro' every convolution.

For I am of a numerous house,  
 With many kinsmen gay,  
 Where long and largely we carouse  
 As who shall say me nay:  
 Each month, a birth-day coming on,  
 We drink defying trouble,  
 Or sometimes two would meet in one,  
 And then we drank it double;

Whether the vintage, yet unkept,  
 Had relish fiery-new,  
 Or elbow-deep in sawdust, slept,  
 As old as Waterloo;  
 Or stow'd, when classic Canning died,  
 In musty bins and chambers,  
 Had cast upon its crusty side  
 The gloom of ten Decembers.

The Muse, the jolly Muse, it is!  
 She answer'd to my call,  
 She changes with that mood or this,  
 Is all-in-all to all:  
 She lit the spark within my throat,  
 To make my blood run quicker,

Used all her fiery will, and smote  
Her life into the liquor.

And hence this halo lives about  
The waiter's hands, that reach  
To each his perfect pint of stout,  
His proper chop to each.  
He looks not like the common breed  
That with the napkin dally;  
I think he came like Ganymede,  
From some delightful valley.

The Cock was of a larger egg  
Than modern poultry drop,  
Stept forward on a firmer leg,  
And cramm'd a plumper crop;  
Upon an ampler dunghill trod,  
Crow'd lustier late and early,  
Sipt wine from silver, praising God,  
And raked in golden barley.

A private life was all his joy,  
Till in a court he saw  
A something-pottle-bodied boy  
That knuckled at the taw:  
He stoop'd and clutch'd him, fair and  
good,  
Flew over roof and casement:  
His brothers of the weather stood  
Stock-still for sheer amazement.

But he, by farmstead, thorpe and spire,  
And follow'd with acclaims,  
A sign to many a staring shire  
Came crowing over Thames.  
Right down by smoky Paul's they bore,  
Till, where the street grows straiter,  
One fix'd for ever at the door,  
And one became head-waiter.

But whither would my fancy go?  
How out of place she makes  
The violet of a legend blow  
Among the chops and steaks!  
'Tis but a steward of the can,  
One shade more plump than common;  
As just and mere a serving-man  
As any born of woman.

I ranged too high: what draws me  
down  
Into the common day?

Is it the weight of that half-crown,  
Which I shall have to pay?  
For, something duller than at first,  
Nor wholly comfortable,  
I sit, my empty glass reversed,  
And thrumming on the table:

Half fearful that, with self at strife,  
I take myself to task;  
Lest of the fullness of my life  
I leave an empty flask:  
For I had hope, by something rare  
To prove myself a poet:  
But, while I plan and plan, my hair  
Is gray before I know it.

So fares it since the years began,  
Till they be gather'd up;  
The truth, that flies the flowing can,  
Will haunt the vacant cup:  
And others' follies teach us not,  
Nor much their wisdom teaches;  
And most, of sterling worth, is what  
Our own experience preaches.

Ah, let the rusty theme alone!  
We know not what we know.  
But for my pleasant hour, 'tis gone;  
'Tis gone, and let it go.  
'Tis gone: a thousand such have slipt  
Away from my embraces,  
And fall'n into the dusty crypt  
Of darken'd forms and faces.

Go, therefore, thou! thy betters went  
Long since, and came no more;  
With peals of genial clamour sent  
From many a tavern-door,  
With twisted quirks and happy hits,  
From misty men of letters;  
The tavern-hours of mighty wits—  
Thine elders and thy betters.

Hours, when the Poet's words and looks  
Had yet their native glow:  
Nor yet the fear of little books  
Had made him talk for show;  
But, all his vast heart sherris-warm'd,  
He flash'd his random speeches,  
Ere days, that deal in ana, swarm'd  
His literary leeches.

So mix for ever with the past,  
 Like all good things on earth!  
 For should I prize thee, couldst thou  
 last,  
 At half thy real worth?  
 I hold it good, good things should pass:  
 With time I will not quarrel:  
 It is but yonder empty glass  
 That makes me maudlin-moral.

Head-waiter of the chop-house here,  
 To which I most resort,  
 I too must part: I hold thee dear  
 For this good pint of port.  
 For this, thou shalt from all things suck  
 Marrow of mirth and laughter;  
 And wheresoe'er thou move, good luck  
 Shall fling her old shoe after.

But thou wilt never move from hence,  
 The sphere thy fate allots:  
 Thy latter days increased with pence  
 Go down among the pots:  
 Thou battenest by the greasy gleam  
 In haunts of hungry sinners,  
 Old boxes, larded with the steam  
 Of thirty thousand dinners.

We fret, we fume, would shift our skins,  
 Would quarrel with our lot;  
 Thy care is, under polish'd tins,  
 To serve the hot-and-hot;  
 To come and go, and come again,  
 Returning like the pewit,  
 And watch'd by silent gentlemen,  
 That trifle with the cruet.

Live long, ere from thy topmost head  
 The thick-set hazel dies;  
 Long, ere the hateful crow shall tread  
 The corners of thine eyes:  
 Live long, nor feel in head or chest  
 Our changeful equinoxes,  
 Till mellow Death, like some late guest,  
 Shall call thee from the boxes.

But when he calls, and thou shalt cease  
 To pace the gritted floor,  
 And, laying down an unctuous lease  
 Of life, shalt earn no more;  
 No carved cross-bones, the types of Death,  
 Shall show thee past to Heaven:

But carved cross-pipes, and, underneath,  
 A pint-pot neatly graven.

## LADY CLARE.

It was the time when lilies blow,  
 And clouds are highest up in air,  
 Lord Ronald brought a lily-white doe  
 To give his cousin, Lady Clare.

I trow they did not part in scorn:  
 Lovers long-betroth'd were they:  
 They two will wed the morrow morn:  
 God's blessing on the day!

'He does not love me for my birth,  
 Nor for my lands so broad and fair;  
 He loves me for my own true worth,  
 And that is well,' said Lady Clare.

In there came old Alice the nurse,  
 Said, 'Who was this that went from  
 thee?'

'It was my cousin,' said Lady Clare,  
 'To-morrow he weds with me.'

'O God be thank'd!' said Alice the nurse,  
 'That all comes round so just and fair:  
 Lord Ronald is heir of all your lands,  
 And you are *not* the Lady Clare.'

'Are ye out of your mind, my nurse, my  
 nurse?'  
 Said Lady Clare, 'that ye speak so  
 wild?'

'As God's above,' said Alice the nurse,  
 'I speak the truth: you are my child.'

'The old Earl's daughter died at my  
 breast;  
 I speak the truth, as I live by bread!  
 I buried her like my own sweet child,  
 And put my child in her stead.'

'Falsely, falsely have ye done,  
 O mother,' she said, 'if this be true,  
 To keep the best man under the sun  
 So many years from his due.'

'Nay now, my child,' said Alice the  
 nurse,  
 'But keep the secret for your life,

And all you have will be Lord Ronald's,  
When you are man and wife.'

'If I'm a beggar born,' she said,  
'I will speak out, for I dare not lie.  
Pull off, pull off, the brooch of gold,  
And fling the diamond necklace by.'

'Nay now, my child,' said Alice the  
nurse,  
'But keep the secret all ye can.'  
She said, 'Not so: but I will know  
If there be any faith in man.'

'Nay now, what faith?' said Alice the  
nurse,  
'The man will cleave unto his right.'  
'And he shall have it,' the lady replied,  
'Tho' I should die to-night.'

'Yet give one kiss to your mother dear!  
Alas, my child, I sinn'd for thee.'  
'O mother, mother, mother,' she said,  
'So strange it seems to me.'

'Yet here's a kiss for my mother dear,  
My mother dear, if this be so,  
And lay your hand upon my head,  
And bless me, mother, ere I go.'

She clad herself in a russet gown,  
She was no longer Lady Clare:  
She went by dale, and she went by down,  
With a single rose in her hair.

The lily-white doe Lord Ronald had  
brought  
Leapt up from where she lay,  
Dropt her head in the maiden's hand,  
And follow'd her all the way.

Down stopt Lord Ronald from his tower:  
'O Lady Clare, you shame your worth!  
Why come you drest like a village maid,  
That are the flower of the earth?'

'If I come drest like a village maid,  
I am but as my fortunes are:  
I am a beggar born,' she said,  
'And not the Lady Clare.'

'Play me no tricks,' said Lord Ronald,  
'For I am yours in word and in deed.

Play me no tricks,' said Lord Ronald,  
'Your riddle is hard to read.'

O and proudly stood she up!  
Her heart within her did not fail:  
She look'd into Lord Ronald's eyes,  
And told him all her nurse's tale.

He laugh'd a laugh of merry scorn:  
He turn'd and kiss'd her where she  
stood:

'If you are not the heiress born,  
And I,' said he, 'the next in blood—

'If you are not the heiress born,  
And I,' said he, 'the lawful heir,  
We two will wed to-morrow morn,  
And you shall still be Lady Clare.'

## THE CAPTAIN.

### A LEGEND OF THE NAVY.

HE that only rules by terror  
Doeth grievous wrong.  
Deep as Hell I count his error.  
Let him hear my song.  
Brave the Captain was: the seamen  
Made a gallant crew,  
Gallant sons of English freemen,  
Sailors bold and true.  
But they hated his oppression,  
Stern he was and rash;  
So for every light transgression  
Doom'd them to the lash.  
Day by day more harsh and cruel  
Seem'd the Captain's mood.  
Secret wrath like smother'd fuel  
Burnt in each man's blood.  
Yet he hoped to purchase glory,  
Hoped to make the name  
Of his vessel great in story,  
Wheresoe'er he came.  
So they past by capes and islands,  
Many a harbour-mouth,  
Sailing under palmy highlands  
Far within the South.  
On a day when they were going  
O'er the lone expanse,  
In the north, her canvas flowing,  
Rose a ship of France.  
Then the Captain's colour heighten'd,  
Joyful came his speech:

But a cloudy gladness lighten'd  
 In the eyes of each.  
 'Chase,' he said: the ship flew forward,  
 And the wind did blow;  
 Stately, lightly, went she Norward,  
 Till she near'd the foe.  
 Then they look'd at him they hated,  
 Had what they desired:  
 Mute with folded arms they waited —  
 Not a gun was fired.  
 But they heard the foeman's thunder  
 Roaring out their doom;  
 All the air was torn in sunder,  
 Crashing went the boom,  
 Spars were splinter'd, decks were shat-  
 ter'd,  
 Bullets fell like rain;  
 Over mast and deck were scatter'd  
 Blood and brains of men.  
 Spars were splinter'd; decks were  
 broken:  
 Every mother's son —  
 Down they dropt — no word was  
 spoken —  
 Each beside his gun.  
 On the decks as they were lying,  
 Were their faces grim.  
 In their blood, as they lay dying,  
 Did they smile on him.  
 Those, in whom he had reliance  
 For his noble name,  
 With one smile of still defiance  
 Sold him unto shame.  
 Shame and wrath his heart confounded,  
 Pale he turn'd and red,  
 Till himself was deadly wounded  
 Falling on the dead.  
 Dismal error! fearful slaughter!  
 Years have wander'd by,  
 Side by side beneath the water  
 Crew and Captain lie;  
 There the sunlit ocean tosses  
 O'er them mouldering,  
 And the lonely seabird crosses  
 With one waft of the wing.

## THE LORD OF BURLEIGH.

In her ear he whispers gaily,  
 'If my heart by signs can tell,  
 Maiden, I have watch'd thee daily,  
 And I think thou lov'st me well.'

She replies, in accents fainter,  
 'There is none I love like thee.'  
 He is but a landscape-painter,  
 And a village maiden she.  
 He to lips, that fondly falter,  
 Presses his without reproof:  
 Leads her to the village altar,  
 And they leave her father's roof.  
 'I can make no marriage present:  
 Little can I give my wife.  
 Love will make our cottage pleasant,  
 And I love thee more than life.'  
 They by parks and lodges going  
 See the lordly castles stand:  
 Summer woods, about them blowing,  
 Made a murmur in the land.  
 From deep thought himself he rouses,  
 Says to her that loves him well,  
 'Let us see these handsome houses  
 Where the wealthy nobles dwell.'  
 So she goes by him attended,  
 Hears him lovingly converse,  
 Sees whatever fair and splendid  
 Lay betwixt his home and hers;  
 Parks with oak and chestnut shady,  
 Parks and order'd gardens great,  
 Ancient homes of lord and lady,  
 Built for pleasure and for state.  
 All he shows her makes him dearer:  
 Evermore she seems to gaze  
 On that cottage growing nearer,  
 Where they twain will spend their  
 days.  
 O but she will love him truly!  
 He shall have a cheerful home;  
 She will order all things duly,  
 When beneath his roof they come.  
 Thus her heart rejoices greatly,  
 Till a gateway she discerns  
 With armorial bearings stately,  
 And beneath the gate she turns;  
 Sees a mansion more majestic  
 Than all those she saw before:  
 Many a gallant gay domestic  
 Bows before him at the door.  
 And they speak in gentle murmur,  
 When they answer to his call,  
 While he treads with footstep firmer,  
 Leading on from hall to hall.  
 And, while now she wonders blindly,  
 Nor the meaning can divine,  
 Proudly turns he round and kindly,  
 'All of this is mine and thine.'

Here he lives in state and bounty,  
 Lord of Burleigh, fair and free,  
 Not a lord in all the county  
 Is so great a lord as he.  
 All at once the colour flushes  
 Her sweet face from brow to chin :  
 As it were with shame she blushes,  
 And her spirit changed within.  
 Then her countenance all over  
 Pale again as death did prove :  
 But he clasp'd her like a lover,  
 And he cheer'd her soul with love.  
 So she strove against her weakness,  
 Tho' at times her spirit sank :  
 Shaped her heart with woman's meekness  
 To all duties of her rank :  
 And a gentle consort made he,  
 And her gentle mind was such  
 That she grew a noble lady,  
 And the people loved her much.  
 But a trouble weigh'd upon her,  
 And perplex'd her, night and morn,  
 With the burthen of an honour  
 Unto which she was not born.  
 Faint she grew, and ever fainter,  
 And she murmur'd, 'Oh, that he  
 Were once more that landscape-painter,  
 Which did win my heart from me !'  
 So she droop'd and droop'd before him,  
 Fading slowly from his side :  
 Three fair children first she bore him,  
 Then before her time she died.  
 Weeping, weeping late and early,  
 Walking up and pacing down,  
 Deeply mourn'd the Lord of Burleigh,  
 Burleigh-house by Stamford-town.  
 And he came to look upon her,  
 And he look'd at her and said,  
 'Bring the dress and put it on her,  
 That she wore when she was wed.'  
 Then her people, softly treading,  
 Bore to earth her body, drest  
 In the dress that she was wed in,  
 That her spirit might have rest.

## THE VOYAGE.

## I.

WE left behind the painted buoy  
 That tosses at the harbour-mouth ;  
 And madly danced our hearts with joy,  
 As fast we fled to the South :

How fresh was every sight and sound  
 On open main or winding shore !  
 We knew the merry world was round,  
 And we might sail for evermore.

## II.

Warm broke the breeze against the brow,  
 Dry sang the tackle, sang the sail :  
 The Lady's-head upon the prow  
 Caught the shrill salt, and sheer'd the  
 gale.  
 The broad seas swell'd to meet the keel,  
 And swept behind ; so quick the run,  
 We felt the good ship shake and reel,  
 We seem'd to sail into the Sun !

## III.

How oft we saw the Sun retire,  
 And burn the threshold of the night,  
 Fall from his Ocean-lane of fire,  
 And sleep beneath his pillar'd light !  
 How oft the purple-skirted robe  
 Of twilight slowly downward drawn,  
 As thro' the slumber of the globe  
 Again we dash'd into the dawn !

## IV.

New stars all night above the brim  
 Of waters lighten'd into view ;  
 They climb'd as quickly, for the rim  
 Changed every moment as we flew.  
 Far ran the naked moon across  
 The houseless ocean's heaving field,  
 Or flying shone, the silver boss  
 Of her own halo's dusky shield ;

## V.

The peaky islet shifted shapes,  
 High towns on hills were dimly seen,  
 We past long lines of Northern capes  
 And dewy Northern meadows green.  
 We came to warmer waves, and deep  
 Across the boundless east we drove,  
 Where those long swells of breaker sweep  
 The nutmeg rocks and isles of clove.

## VI.

By peaks that flamed, or, all in shade,  
 Gloom'd the low coast and quivering  
 brine  
 With ash rains, that spreading made  
 Fantastic plume or sable pine ;



By sands and steaming flats, and floods  
Of mighty mouth, we scudded fast,  
And hills and scarlet-mingled woods  
Glow'd for a moment as we past.

## VII.

O hundred shores of happy climes,  
How swiftly stream'd ye by the bark!  
At times the whole sea burn'd, at times  
With wakes of fire we tore the dark;  
At times a carven craft would shoot  
From havens hid in fairy bowers,  
With naked limbs and flowers and fruit,  
But we nor paused for fruit nor flowers.

## VIII.

For one fair Vision ever fled  
Down the waste waters day and night,  
And still we follow'd where she led,  
In hope to gain upon her flight.  
Her face was evermore unseen,  
And fixt upon the far sea-line;  
But each man murmur'd, 'O my Queen,  
I follow till I make thee mine.'

## IX.

And now we lost her, now she gleam'd  
Like Fancy made of golden air,  
Now nearer to the prow she seem'd  
Like Virtue firm, like Knowledge fair,  
Now high on waves that idly burst  
Like Heavenly Hope she crown'd the  
sea,  
And now, the bloodless point reversed,  
She bore the blade of Liberty.

## X.

And only one among us — him  
We pleased not — he was seldom  
pleased:  
He saw not far: his eyes were dim:  
But ours he swore were all diseased.  
'A ship of fools,' he shriek'd in spite,  
'A ship of fools,' he sneer'd and  
wept.  
And overboard one stormy night  
He cast his body, and on we swept.

## XI.

And never sail of ours was furl'd,  
Nor anchor dropt at eve or morn;

We lov'd the glories of the world,  
But laws of nature were our scorn.  
For blasts would rise and rave and cease,  
But whence were those that drove the  
sail  
Across the whirlwind's heart of peace,  
And to and thro' the counter gale?

## XII.

Again to colder climes we came,  
For still we follow'd where she led:  
Now mate is blind and captain lame,  
And half the crew are sick or dead;  
But, blind or lame or sick or sound,  
We follow that which flies before:  
We know the merry world is round,  
And we may sail for evermore.

SIR LAUNCELOT AND QUEEN  
GUINEVERE.

## A FRAGMENT.

LIKE souls that balance joy and pain,  
With tears and smiles from heaven again  
The maiden Spring upon the plain  
Came in a sun-lit fall of rain.  
In crystal vapour everywhere  
Blue isles of heaven laugh'd between,  
And far, in forest-deeps unseen,  
The topmost elm-tree gather'd green  
From draughts of balmy air.

Sometimes the linnet piped his song:  
Sometimes the throstle whistled strong:  
Sometimes the sparrowhawk, wheel'd along,  
Hush'd all the groves from fear of wrong:  
By grassy capes with fuller sound  
In curves the yellowing river ran,  
And drooping chestnut-buds began  
To spread into the perfect fan,  
Above the teeming ground.

Then, in the boyhood of the year,  
Sir Launcelot and Queen Guinevere  
Rode thro' the coverts of the deer,  
With blissful treble ringing clear.  
She seem'd a part of joyous Spring  
A gown of grass-green silk she wore,  
Buckled with golden clasps before;  
A light-green tuft of plumes she bore  
Closed in a golden ring.

Now on some twisted ivy-net,  
 Now by some tinkling rivulet,  
 In mosses mixt with violet  
 Her cream-white mule his pastern set :  
     And flecter now she skimm'd the  
     plains  
 Than she whose elfin prancer springs  
 By night to eery warblings,  
 When all the glimmering moorland rings  
     With jingling bridle-reins.

As fast she fled thro' sun and shade,  
 The happy winds upon her play'd,  
 Blowing the ringlet from the braid :  
 She look'd so lovely, as she sway'd  
     The rein with dainty finger-tips,  
 A man had given all other bliss,  
 And all his worldly worth for this,  
 To waste his whole heart in one kiss  
     Upon her perfect lips.

#### A FAREWELL.

Flow down, cold rivulet, to the sea,  
 Thy tribute wave deliver :  
 No more by thee my steps shall be,  
     For ever and for ever.

Flow, softly flow, by lawn and lea,  
 A rivulet, then a river :  
 No where by thee my steps shall be,  
     For ever and for ever.

But here will sigh thine alder tree,  
 And here thine aspen shiver ;  
 And here by thee will hum the bee,  
     For ever and for ever.

A thousand suns will stream on thee,  
 A thousand moons will quiver ;  
 But not by thee my steps shall be,  
     For ever and for ever.

#### THE BEGGAR MAID.

HER arms across her breast she laid ;  
 She was more fair than words can say :  
 Bare-footed came the beggar maid  
     Before the king Cophetua.  
 In robe and crown the king stept down,  
     To meet and greet her on her way ;

'It is no wonder,' said the lords,  
 'She is more beautiful than day.'

As shines the moon in clouded skies,  
 She in her poor attire was seen :  
 One praised her ankles, one her eyes,  
 One her dark hair and lovesome mien.  
 So sweet a face, such angel grace,  
 In all that land had never been :  
 Cophetua sware a royal oath :  
 'This beggar maid shall be my queen !'

#### THE EAGLE.

##### FRAGMENT.

HE clasps the crag with crooked hands ;  
 Close to the sun in lonely lands,  
 Ring'd with the azure world, he stands.

The wrinkled sea beneath him crawls ;  
 He watches from his mountain walls,  
 And like a thunderbolt he falls.

MOVE eastward, happy earth, and leave  
 Yon orange sunset waning slow :  
 From fringes of the faded eve,  
 O, happy planet, eastward go ;  
 Till over thy dark shoulder glow  
 Thy silver sister-world, and rise  
 To glass herself in dewy eyes  
 That watch me from the glen below.

Ah, bear me with thee, smoothly borne,  
 Dip forward under starry light,  
 And move me to my marriage-morn,  
 And round again to happy night.

COME not, when I am dead,  
 To drop thy foolish tears upon my  
 grave,  
 To trample round my fallen head,  
 And vex the unhappy dust thou wouldst  
 not save.  
 There let the wind sweep and the plover  
 cry ;  
     But thou, go by.

Child, if it were thine error or thy  
 crime  
 I care no longer, being all unllest :

Wed whom thou wilt, but I am sick of  
 Time,  
 And I desire to rest.  
 Pass on, weak heart, and leave me where  
 I lie:  
 Go by, go by.

## THE LETTERS.

## I.

STILL on the tower stood the vane,  
 A black yew gloom'd the stagnant  
 air,  
 I peer'd athwart the chancel pane  
 And saw the altar cold and bare.  
 A clog of lead was round my feet,  
 A band of pain across my brow;  
 'Cold altar, Heaven and earth shall meet  
 Before you hear my marriage vow.'

## II.

I turn'd and humm'd a bitter song  
 That mock'd the wholesome human  
 heart,  
 And then we met in wrath and wrong,  
 We met, but only meant to part.  
 Full cold my greeting was and dry;  
 She faintly smiled, she hardly moved;  
 I saw with half-unconscious eye  
 She wore the colours I approved.

## III.

She took the little ivory chest,  
 With half a sigh she turn'd the key,  
 Then raised her head with lips comprest,  
 And gave my letters back to me.  
 And gave the trinkets and the rings,  
 My gifts, when gifts of mine could  
 please;  
 As looks a father on the things  
 Of his dead son, I look'd on these.

## IV.

She told me all her friends had said;  
 I raged against the public liar;  
 She talk'd as if her love were dead,  
 But in my words were seeds of fire.  
 'No more of love; your sex is known  
 I never will be twice deceived.  
 Henceforth I trust the man alone,  
 The woman cannot be believed.

## V.

'Thro' slander, meanest spawn of Hell—  
 And women's slander is the worst,  
 And you, whom once I lov'd so well,  
 Thro' you, my life will be accurst.'  
 I spoke with heart, and heat and force,  
 I shook her breast with vague alarms—  
 Like torrents from a mountain source  
 We rush'd into each other's arms.

## VI.

We parted: sweetly gleam'd the stars,  
 And sweet the vapour-braided blue,  
 Low breezes fann'd the belfry bars,  
 As homeward by the church I drew.  
 The very graves appear'd to smile,  
 So fresh they rose in shadow'd swells.  
 'Dark porch,' I said, 'and silent aisle,  
 There comes a sound of marriage bells.'

## THE VISION OF SIN.

## I.

I HAD a vision when the night was late:  
 A youth came riding toward a palace-gate.  
 He rode a horse with wings, that would  
 have flown,  
 But that his heavy rider kept him down.  
 And from the palace came a child of sin,  
 And took him by the curls, and led him in,  
 Where sat a company with heated eyes,  
 Expecting when a fountain should arise:  
 A sleepy light upon their brows and lips—  
 As when the sun, a crescent of eclipse,  
 Dreams over lake and lawn, and isles and  
 capes—  
 Suffused them, sitting, lying, languid  
 shapes,  
 By heaps of gourds, and skins of wine,  
 and piles of grapes.

## II.

Then methought I heard a mellow sound,  
 Gathering up from all the lower ground;  
 Narrowing in to where they sat assembled  
 Low voluptuous music winding trembled,  
 Wov'n in circles: they that heard it sigh'd,  
 Panted hand-in-hand with faces pale,  
 Swung themselves, and in low tones re-  
 plied;

Till the fountain spouted, showering wide  
Sleet of diamond-drift and pearly hail;  
Then the music touch'd the gates and  
died;

Rose again from where it seem'd to fail,  
Storm'd in orbs of song, a growing gale;  
Till thronging in and in, to where they  
waited,

As 'twere a hundred-throated nightingale,  
The strong tempestuous treble throbb'd  
and palpitated;

Ran into its giddiest whirl of sound,  
Caught the sparkles, and in circles,  
Purple gauzes, golden hazes, liquid mazes,  
Flung the torrent rainbow round :  
Then they started from their places,  
Moved with violence, changed in hue,  
Caught each other with wild grimaces,  
Half-invisible to the view,  
Wheeling with precipitate paces  
To the melody, till they flew,  
Hair, and eyes, and limbs, and faces,  
Twisted hard in fierce embraces,  
Like to Furies, like to Graces,  
Dash'd together in blinding dew :  
Till, kill'd with some luxurious agony  
The nerve-dissolving melody  
Flutter'd headlong from the sky.

## III.

And then I look'd up toward a mountain-  
tract,  
That girt the region with high cliff and  
lawn :

I saw that every morning, far withdrawn  
Beyond the darkness and the cataract,  
God made Himself an awful rose of  
dawn,

Unheeded; and detaching, fold by fold,  
From those still heights, and, slowly  
drawing near,

A vapour heavy, hueless, formless, cold,  
Came floating on for many a month and  
year,

Unheeded: and I thought I would have  
spoken,  
And warn'd that madman ere it grew too  
late :

But, as in dreams, I could not. Mine  
was broken,  
When that cold vapour touch'd the pal-  
ace gate,

And link'd again. I saw within my  
head

A gray and gap-tooth'd man as lean as  
death,

Who slowly rode across a wither'd heath,  
And lighted at a ruin'd inn, and said :

## IV.

' Wrinkled ostler, grim and thin !  
Here is custom come your way ;  
Take my brute, and lead him in,  
Stuff his ribs with mouldy hay.

' Bitter barmaid, waning fast !  
See that sheets are on my bed ;  
What ! the flower of life is past :  
It is long before you wed.

' Slip-shod waiter, lank and sour,  
At the Dragon on the heath !  
Let us have a quiet hour,  
Let us hob-and-nob with Death.

' I am old, but let me drink ;  
Bring me spices, bring me wine ;  
I remember, when I think,  
That my youth was half divine.

' Wine is good for shrivell'd lips,  
When a blanket wraps the day,  
When the rotten woodland drips,  
And the leaf is stamp'd in clay.

' Sit thee down, and have no shame,  
Cheek by jowl, and knee by knee :  
What care I for any name ?  
What for order or degree ?

' Let me screw thee up a peg :  
Let me loose thy tongue with wine :  
Callest thou that thing a leg ?  
Which is thinnest? thine or mine ?

' Thou shalt not be saved by works :  
Thou hast been a sinner too :  
Ruin'd trunks on wither'd forks,  
Empty scarecrows, I and you !

' Fill the cup, and fill the can :  
Have a rouse before the morn :  
Every moment dies a man,  
Every moment one is born.

' We are men of ruin'd blood ;  
 Therefore comes it we are wise.  
 Fish are we that love the mud,  
 Rising to no fancy-flies.

' Name and fame ! to fly sublime  
 Thro' the courts, the camps, the  
 schools,  
 Is to be the ball of Time,  
 Banded by the hands of fools.

' Friendship ! — to be two in one —  
 Let the canting liar pack !  
 Well I know, when I am gone,  
 How she mouths behind my back.

' Virtue ! — to be good and just —  
 Every heart, when sifted well,  
 Is a clot of warmer dust,  
 Mix'd with cunning sparks of hell.

' O ! we two as well can look  
 Whited thought and cleanly life  
 As the priest, above his book  
 Leering at his neighbour's wife.

' Fill the cup, and fill the can :  
 Have a rouse before the morn :  
 Every moment dies a man,  
 Every moment one is born.

' Drink, and let the parties rave :  
 They are fill'd with idle spleen ;  
 Rising, falling, like a wave,  
 For they know not what they mean.

' He that roars for liberty  
 Faster binds a tyrant's power ;  
 And the tyrant's cruel glee  
 Forces on the freer hour.

' Fill the can, and fill the cup :  
 All the windy ways of men  
 Are but dust that rises up,  
 And is lightly laid again.

' Greet her with applausive breath,  
 Freedom, gaily doth she tread ;  
 In her right a civic wreath,  
 In her left a human head :

' No, I love not what is new ;  
 She is of an ancient house :

And I think we know the hue  
 Of that cap upon her brows.

' Let her go ! her thirst she slakes  
 Where the bloody conduit runs,  
 Then her sweetest meal she makes  
 On the first-born of her sons.

' Drink to lofty hopes that cool —  
 Visions of a perfect State :  
 Drink we, last, the public fool,  
 Frantic love and frantic hate.

' Chant me now some wicked stave,  
 Till thy drooping courage rise,  
 And the glow-worm of the grave  
 Glimmer in thy rheumy eyes.

' Fear not thou to loose thy tongue ;  
 Set thy hoary fancies free ;  
 What is loathsome to the young  
 Savours well to thee and me.

' Change, reverting to the years,  
 When thy nerves could understand  
 What there is in loving tears,  
 And the warmth of hand in hand.

' Tell me tales of thy first love —  
 April hopes, the fools of chance ;  
 Till the graves begin to move,  
 And the dead begin to dance.

' Fill the can, and fill the cup :  
 All the windy ways of men  
 Are but dust that rises up,  
 And is lightly laid again.

' Trooping from their mouldy dens  
 The chap-fallen circle spreads :  
 Welcome, fellow-citizens,  
 Hollow hearts and empty heads !

' You are bones, and what of that ?  
 Every face, however full,  
 Padded round with flesh and fat,  
 Is but modell'd on a skull.

' Death is king, and Vivat Rex !  
 Tread a measure on the stones,  
 Madam — if I know your sex,  
 From the fashion of your bones.

'No, I cannot praise the fire  
In your eye — nor yet your lip:  
All the more do I admire  
Joints of cunning workmanship.

'Lo! God's likeness — the ground-plan —  
Neither modell'd, glazed, nor framed:  
Buss me, thou rough sketch of man,  
Far too naked to be shamed!

'Drink to Fortune, drink to Chance,  
While we keep a little breath!  
Drink to heavy Ignorance!  
Hob-and-nob with brother Death!

'Thou art mazed, the night is long,  
And the longer night is near:  
What! I am not all as wrong  
As a bitter jest is dear.

'Youthful hopes, by scores, to all,  
When the locks are crisp and curl'd;  
Unto me my maudlin gall  
And my mockeries of the world.

'Fill the cup, and fill the can:  
Mingle madness, mingle scorn!  
Dregs of life, and lees of man:  
Yet we will not die folorn.'

## V.

The voice grew faint: there came a  
further change:  
Once more uprose the mystic mountain-  
range:  
Below were men and horses pierced with  
worms,  
And slowly quickening into lower forms;  
By shards and scurf of salt, and scum of  
dross,  
Old plash of rains, and refuse patch'd  
with moss.  
Then some one spake: 'Behold! it was  
a crime  
Of sense avenged by sense that wore with  
time.'  
Another said: 'The crime of sense  
became  
The crime of malice, and is equal blame.'  
And one: 'He had not wholly quench'd  
his power;  
A little grain of conscience made him  
sour.'

At last I heard a voice upon the slope  
Cry to the summit, 'Is there any hope?'  
To which an answer peal'd from that  
high land,  
But in a tongue no man could understand;  
And on the glimmering limit far with-  
drawn  
God made Himself an awful rose of dawn.

## TO —,

AFTER READING A LIFE AND LETTERS.

'Cursed be he that moves my bones.'  
*Shakespeare's Epitaph.*

YOU might have won the Poet's name,  
If such be worth the winning now,  
And gain'd a laurel for your brow  
Of sounder leaf than I can claim;

But you have made the wiser choice,  
A life that moves to gracious ends  
Thro' troops of unrecording friends,  
A deedful life, a silent voice:

And you have miss'd the irreverent doom  
Of those that wear the Poet's crown:  
Hereafter, neither knave nor clown  
Shall hold their orgies at your tomb.

For now the Poet cannot die,  
Nor leave his music as of old,  
But round him ere he scarce be cold  
Begins the scandal and the cry:

'Proclaim the faults he would not show:  
Break lock and seal: betray the trust:  
Keep nothing sacred: 'tis but just  
The many-headed beast should know.'

Ah shameless! for he did but sing  
A song that pleased us from its worth;  
No public life was his on earth,  
No blazon'd statesman he, nor king.

He gave the people of his best:  
His worst he kept, his best he gave.  
My Shakespeare's curse on clown and  
knave  
Who will not let his ashes rest!

Who make it seem more sweet to be  
The little life of bank and brier,



The bird that pipes his lone desire  
And dies unheard within his tree,

Than he that warbles long and loud  
And drops at Glory's temple-gates,  
For whom the carrion vulture waits  
To tear his heart before the crowd!

TO E. L., ON HIS TRAVELS  
IN GREECE.

ILLYRIAN woodlands, echoing falls  
Of water, sheets of summer glass,  
The long divine Peneian pass,  
The vast Akrokeraunian walls,

Tomohrit, Athos, all things fair,  
With such a pencil, such a pen,  
You shadow forth to distant men,  
I read and felt that I was there:

And trust me while I turn'd the page,  
And track'd you still on classic ground,  
I grew in gladness till I found  
My spirits in the golden age.

For me the torrent ever pour'd  
And glisten'd — here and there alone  
The broad-limb'd Gods at random  
thrown  
By fountain-urns; — and Naiads oar'd

A glimmering shoulder under gloom  
Of cavern pillars; on the swell  
The silver lily heaved and fell;  
And many a slope was rich in bloom

From him that on the mountain lea  
By dancing rivulets fed his flocks  
To him who sat upon the rocks,  
And fluted to the morning sea.

BREAK, break, break,  
On thy cold gray stones, O Sea!

And I would that my tongue could utter  
The thoughts that arise in me.

O well for the fisherman's boy,  
That he shouts with his sister at play!  
O well for the sailor lad,  
That he sings in his boat on the bay!

And the stately ships go on  
To their haven under the hill;  
But O for the touch of a vanish'd hand,  
And the sound of a voice that is still!

Break, break, break,  
At the foot of thy crags, O Sea!  
But the tender grace of a day that is  
dead  
Will never come back to me.

THE POET'S SONG.

THE rain had fallen, the Poet arose,  
He pass'd by the town and out of the  
street,  
A light wind blew from the gates of the  
sun,  
And waves of shadow went over the  
wheat,  
And he sat him down in a lonely place,  
And chanted a melody loud and sweet,  
That made the wild-swan pause in her  
cloud,  
And the lark drop down at his feet.

The swallow stopt as he hunted the fly,  
The snake slipt under a spray,  
The wild hawk stood with the down on  
his beak,  
And stared, with his foot on the  
prey,  
And the nightingale thought, 'I have  
sung many songs,  
But never a one so gay,  
For he sings of what the world will be  
When the years have died away.'

## ENOCH ARDEN

## AND OTHER POEMS.

## ENOCH ARDEN.

LONG lines of cliff breaking have left a  
 chasm;  
 And in the chasm are foam and yellow  
 sands;  
 Beyond, red roofs about a narrow wharf  
 In cluster; then a moulder'd church;  
 and higher  
 A long street climbs to one tall-tower'd  
 mill;  
 And high in heaven behind it a gray down  
 With Danish barrows; and a hazelwood,  
 By autumn nutters haunted, flourishes  
 Green in a cuplike hollow of the down.

Here on this beach a hundred years  
 ago,  
 Three children of three houses, Annie  
 Lee,  
 The prettiest little damsel in the port,  
 And Philip Ray the miller's only son,  
 And Enoch Arden, a rough sailor's lad  
 Made orphan by a winter shipwreck,  
 play'd  
 Among the waste and lumber of the shore,  
 Hard coils of cordage, swarthy fishing-  
 nets,  
 Anchors of rusty fluke, and boats up-  
 drawn;  
 And built their castles of dissolving sand  
 To watch them overflow'd, or following up  
 And flying the white breaker, daily left  
 The little footprint daily wash'd away.

A narrow cave ran in beneath the cliff:  
 In this the children play'd at keeping  
 house.  
 Enoch was host one day, Philip the next,  
 While Annie still was mistress; but at  
 times  
 Enoch would hold possession for a week:  
 'This is my house and this my little wife.'  
 'Mine too,' said Philip, 'turn and turn  
 about.'

When, if they quarrell'd, Enoch stronger-  
 made  
 Was master: then would Philip, his blue  
 eyes  
 All flooded with the helpless wrath of  
 tears,  
 Shriek out, 'I hate you, Enoch,' and at  
 this  
 The little wife would weep for company,  
 And pray them not to quarrel for her  
 sake,  
 And say she would be little wife to both.

But when the dawn of rosy childhood  
 past,  
 And the new warmth of life's ascending  
 sun  
 Was felt by either, either fixt his heart  
 On that one girl; and Enoch spoke his  
 love,  
 But Philip loved in silence; and the girl  
 Seem'd kinder unto Philip than to him;  
 But she loved Enoch; tho' she knew it  
 not,  
 And would if ask'd deny it. Enoch set  
 A purpose evermore before his eyes,  
 To hoard all savings to the uttermost,  
 To purchase his own boat, and make a  
 home  
 For Annie: and so prosper'd that at last  
 A luckier or a bolder fisherman,  
 A carefuller in peril, did not breathe  
 For leagues along that breaker-beaten  
 coast  
 Than Enoch. Likewise had he served a  
 year  
 On board a merchantman, and made  
 himself  
 Full sailor; and he thrice had pluck'd a  
 life  
 From the dread sweep of the down-  
 streaming seas:  
 And all men look'd upon him favour-  
 ably:

And ere he touch'd his one-and-twentieth  
 May  
 He purchased his own boat, and made a  
 home  
 For Annie, neat and nestlike, halfway up  
 The narrow street that clamber'd toward  
 the mill.

Then, on a golden autumn eventide,  
 The younger people making holiday,  
 With bag and sack and basket, great and  
 small,  
 Went nutting to the hazels. Philip stay'd  
 (His father lying sick and needing him)  
 An hour behind; but as he climb'd the  
 hill,  
 Just where the prone edge of the wood  
 began  
 To feather toward the hollow, saw the  
 pair,  
 Enoch and Annie, sitting hand-in-hand,  
 His large gray eyes and weather-beaten  
 face  
 All-kindled by a still and sacred fire,  
 That burn'd as on an altar. Philip look'd,  
 And in their eyes and faces read his doom;  
 Then, as their faces drew together,  
 groan'd,  
 And slipt aside, and like a wounded life  
 Crept down into the hollows of the wood;  
 There, while the rest were loud in merry-  
 making,  
 Had his dark hour unseen, and rose and  
 past  
 Bearing a lifelong hunger in his heart.

So these were wed, and merrily rang  
 the hells,  
 And merrily ran the years, seven happy  
 years,  
 Seven happy years of health and com-  
 petence,  
 And mutual love and honourable toil;  
 With children; first a daughter. In him  
 woke,  
 With his first babe's first cry, the noble  
 wish  
 To save all earnings to the uttermost,  
 And give his child a better bringing-up  
 Than his had been, or hers; a wish re-  
 new'd,  
 When two years after came a boy to be  
 The rosy idol of her solitudes,

While Enoch was abroad on wrathful seas,  
 Or often journeying landward; for in truth  
 Enoch's white horse, and Enoch's ocean-  
 spoil

In ocean-smelling osier, and his face,  
 Rough-redden'd with a thousand winter  
 gales,

Not only to the market-cross were known,  
 But in the leafy lanes behind the down,  
 Far as the portal-warding lion-whelp,  
 And peacock-yewtree of the lonely Hall,  
 Whose Friday fare was Enoch's minister-  
 ing.

Then came a change, as all things  
 human change.

Ten miles to northward of the narrow port  
 Open'd a larger haven: thither used  
 Enoch at times to go by land or sea;  
 And once when there, and clambering on  
 a mast

In harbour, by mischance he slipt and  
 fell:

A limb was broken when they lifted him;  
 And while he lay recovering there, his wife  
 Bore him another son, a sickly one:  
 Another hand crept too across his trade  
 Taking her bread and theirs: and on him  
 fell,

Altho' a grave and staid God-fearing man,  
 Yet lying thus inactive, doubt and gloom.  
 He seem'd, as in a nightmare of the night,  
 To see his children leading evermore  
 Low miserable lives of hand-to-mouth,  
 And her, he loved, a beggar: then he  
 pray'd

'Save them from this, whatever comes to  
 me.'

And while he pray'd, the master of that  
 ship

Enoch had served in, hearing his mis-  
 chance,

Came, for he knew the man and valued  
 him,

Reporting of his vessel China-bound,  
 And wanting yet a boatswain. Would  
 he go?

There yet were many weeks before she  
 sail'd,

Sail'd from this port. Would Enoch  
 have the place?

And Enoch all at once assented to it,  
 Rejoicing at that answer to his prayer.

So now that shadow of mischance  
 appear'd  
 No graver than as when some little cloud  
 Cuts off the fiery highway of the sun,  
 And isles a light in the offing: yet the  
 wife —  
 When he was gone — the children —  
 what to do?  
 Then Enoch lay long-pondering on his  
 plans;  
 To sell the boat — and yet he loved her  
 well —  
 How many a rough sea had he weather'd  
 in her!  
 He knew her, as a horseman knows his  
 horse —  
 And yet to sell her — then with what  
 she brought  
 Buy goods and stores — set Annie forth  
 in trade  
 With all that seamen needed or their  
 wives —  
 So might she keep the house while he  
 was gone.  
 Should he not trade himself out yonder?  
 go  
 This voyage more than once? yea twice  
 or thrice —  
 As oft as needed — last, returning rich,  
 Become the master of a larger craft,  
 With fuller profits lead an easier life,  
 Have all his pretty young ones educated,  
 And pass his days in peace among his  
 own.

Thus Enoch in his heart determined  
 all:  
 Then moving homeward came on Annie  
 pale,  
 Nursing the sickly babe, her latest-born.  
 Forward she started with a happy cry,  
 And laid the feeble infant in his arms;  
 Whom Enoch took, and handled all his  
 limbs,  
 Appraised his weight and fondled father-  
 like,  
 But had no heart to break his purposes  
 To Annie, till the morrow, when he  
 spoke.

Then first since Enoch's golden ring  
 had girt  
 Her finger, Annie fought against his will:

Yet not with brawling opposition she,  
 But manifold entreaties, many a tear,  
 Many a sad kiss by day by night renew'd  
 (Sure that all evil would come out of it)  
 Besought him, supplicating, if he cared  
 For her or his dear children, not to go.  
 He not for his own self caring but her,  
 Her and her children, let her plead in  
 vain;  
 So grieving held his will, and bore it  
 thro'.

For Enoch parted with his old sea-  
 friend,  
 Bought Annie goods and stores, and set  
 his hand  
 To fit their little streetward sitting-room  
 With shelf and corner for the goods and  
 stores.  
 So all day long till Enoch's last at home,  
 Shaking their pretty cabin, hammer and  
 axe,  
 Auger and saw, while Annie seem'd to  
 hear  
 Her own death-scaffold raising, shrill'd  
 and rang,  
 Till this was ended, and his careful  
 hand, —  
 The space was narrow, — having order'd  
 all  
 Almost as neat and close as Nature  
 packs  
 Her blossom or her seedling, paused;  
 and he,  
 Who needs would work for Annie to the  
 last,  
 Ascending tired, heavily slept till morn.

And Enoch faced this morning of fare-  
 well  
 Brightly and boldly. All his Annie's  
 fears,  
 Save, as his Annie's, were a laughter to  
 him.  
 Yet Enoch as a brave God-fearing man  
 Bow'd himself down, and in that mystery  
 Where God-in-man is one with man-in-  
 God,  
 Pray'd for a blessing on his wife and  
 babes  
 Whatever came to him: and then he  
 said:  
 'Annie, this voyage by the grace of God

Will bring fair weather yet to all of us.  
Keep a clean hearth and a clear fire for  
me,

For I'll be back, my girl, before you  
know it.'

Then lightly rocking baby's cradle, 'and  
he,

This pretty, puny, weakly little one, —  
Nay — for I love him all the better for  
it —

God bless him, he shall sit upon my  
knees

And I will tell him tales of foreign parts,  
And make him merry, when I come home  
again.

Come, Annie, come, cheer up before I go.'

Him running on thus hopefully she  
heard,  
And almost hoped herself; but when he  
turn'd

The current of his talk to graver things  
In sailor fashion roughly sermonizing  
On providence and trust in Heaven, she  
heard,

Heard and not heard him; as the village  
girl,

Who sets her pitcher underneath the  
spring,

Musing on him that used to fill it for her,  
Hears and not hears, and lets it overflow.

At length she spoke: 'O Enoch, you  
are wise;

And yet for all your wisdom well know I  
That I shall look upon your face no  
more.'

'Well then,' said Enoch, 'I shall look  
on yours.

Annie, the ship I sail in passes here  
(He named the day); get you a seaman's  
glass,

Spy out my face, and laugh at all your  
fears.'

But when the last of those last moments  
came,

'Annie, my girl, cheer up, be comforted,  
Look to the babes, and till I come again  
Keep everything shipshape, for I must  
go.

And fear no more for me; or if you fear

Cast all your cares on God; that anchor  
holds.

Is He not yonder in those uttermost  
Parts of the morning? if I flee to these  
Can I go from Him? and the sea is His,  
The sea is His: He made it.'

Enoch rose,  
Cast his strong arms about his drooping  
wife,

And kiss'd his wonder-stricken little  
ones;

But for the third, the sickly one, who  
slept

After a night of feverous wakefulness,  
When Annie would have raised him  
Enoch said,

'Wake him not; let him sleep; how  
should the child

Remember this?' and kiss'd him in his  
cot.

But Annie from her baby's forehead clipt  
A tiny curl, and gave it: this he kept  
Thro' all his future; but now hastily  
caught

His bundle, waved his hand, and went  
his way.

She, when the day, that Enoch men-  
tion'd, came,

Borrow'd a glass, but all in vain: perhaps  
She could not fix the glass to suit her eye;  
Perhaps her eye was dim, hand tremulous;  
She saw him not: and while he stood on  
deck

Waving, the moment and the vessel past.

Ev'n to the last dip of the vanishing sail  
She watch'd it, and departed weeping for  
him;

Then, tho' she mourn'd his absence as  
his grave,

Set her sad will no less to chime with his,  
But throve not in her trade, not being  
bred

To barter, nor compensating the want  
By shrewdness, neither capable of lies,  
Nor asking overmuch and taking less,  
And still foreboding 'what would Enoch  
say?'

For more than once, in days of difficulty  
And pressure, had she sold her wares for  
less

Than what she gave in buying what she  
 sold:  
 She fail'd and sadden'd knowing it; and  
 thus,  
 Expectant of that news which never  
 came,  
 Gain'd for her own a scanty sustenance,  
 And lived a life of silent melancholy.

Now the third child was sickly-born  
 and grew  
 Yet sicklier, tho' the mother cared for it  
 With all a mother's care: nevertheless,  
 Whether her business often call'd her  
 from it,  
 Or thro' the want of what it needed most,  
 Or means to pay the voice who best  
 could tell  
 What most it needed — howsoe'er it was,  
 After a lingering, — ere she was aware, —  
 Like the caged bird escaping suddenly,  
 The little innocent soul flitted away.

In that same week when Annie buried it,  
 Philip's true heart, which hunger'd for  
 her peace  
 (Since Enoch left he had not look'd upon  
 her),  
 Smote him, as having kept aloof so long.  
 'Surely,' said Philip, 'I may see her now,  
 May be some little comfort;' therefore  
 went,  
 Past thro' the solitary room in front,  
 Paused for a moment at an inner door,  
 Then struck it thrice, and, no one opening,  
 Enter'd; but Annie, seated with her grief,  
 Fresh from the burial of her little one,  
 Cared not to look on any human face,  
 But turn'd her own toward the wall and  
 wept.  
 Then Philip standing up said falteringly,  
 'Annie, I came to ask a favour of you.'

He spoke; the passion in her moan'd  
 reply,  
 'Favour from one so sad and so forlorn  
 As I am!' half abash'd him; yet unask'd,  
 His bashfulness and tenderness at war,  
 He set himself beside her, saying to her:

'I came to speak to you of what he  
 wish'd,  
 Enoch, your husband: I have ever said

You chose the best among us — a strong  
 man:  
 For where he fixt his heart he set his  
 hand  
 To do the thing he will'd, and bore it  
 thro'.'  
 And wherefore did he go this weary way,  
 And leave you lonely? not to see the  
 world —  
 For pleasure? — nay, but for the where-  
 withal  
 To give his babes a better bringing-up  
 Than his had been, or yours: that was  
 his wish.  
 And if he come again, vext will he be  
 To find the precious morning hours were  
 lost.  
 And it would vex him even in his grave,  
 If he could know his babes were running  
 wild  
 Like colts about the waste. So, Annie,  
 now —  
 Have we not known each other all our  
 lives?  
 I do beseech you by the love you bear  
 Him and his children not to say me nay —  
 For, if you will, when Enoch comes again  
 Why then he shall repay me — if you will,  
 Annie — for I am rich and well-to-do.  
 Now let me put the boy and girl to  
 school:  
 This is the favour that I came to ask.'

Then Annie with her brows against  
 the wall  
 Answer'd, 'I cannot look you in the face;  
 I seem so foolish and so broken down.  
 When you came in my sorrow broke me  
 down;  
 And now I think your kindness breaks  
 me down;  
 But Enoch lives; that is borne in on me:  
 He will repay you: money can be repaid;  
 Not kindness such as yours.'

And Philip ask'd  
 'Then you will let me, Annie?'

There she turn'd,  
 She rose, and fixt her swimming eyes  
 upon him,  
 And dwelt a moment on his kindly face,  
 Then calling down a blessing on his head



Caught at his hand, and wrung it passionately,  
 And past into the little garth beyond.  
 So lifted up in spirit he moved away.

Then Philip put the boy and girl to school,  
 And bought them needful books, and every way,  
 Like one who does his duty by his own,  
 Made himself theirs; and tho' for Annie's sake,  
 Fearing the lazy gossip of the port,  
 He oft denied his heart his dearest wish,  
 And seldom crost her threshold, yet he sent  
 Gifts by the children, garden-herbs and fruit,  
 The late and early roses from his wall,  
 Or conies from the down, and now and then,  
 With some pretext of fineness in the meal  
 To save the offence of charitable, flour  
 From his tall mill that whistled on the waste.

But Philip did not fathom Annie's mind:  
 Scarce could the woman when he came upon her,  
 Out of full heart and boundless gratitude  
 Light on a broken word to thank him with.  
 But Philip was her children's all-in-all;  
 From distant corners of the street they ran  
 To greet his hearty welcome heartily;  
 Lords of his house and of his mill were they;  
 Worried his passive ear with petty wrongs  
 Or pleasures, hung upon him, play'd with him  
 And call'd him Father Philip. Philip gain'd  
 As Enoch lost; for Enoch seem'd to them  
 Uncertain as a vision or a dream,  
 Faint as a figure seen in early dawn  
 Down at the far end of an avenue,  
 Going we know not where: and so ten years,  
 Since Enoch left his hearth and native land,  
 Fled forward, and no news of Enoch came.

It chanced one evening Annie's children long'd  
 To go with others, nutting to the wood,  
 And Annie would go with them; then they begg'd  
 For Father Philip (as they call'd him) too:  
 Him, like the working bee in blossom-dust,  
 Blanch'd with his mill, they found; and saying to him,  
 'Come with us, Father Philip,' he denied;  
 But when the children pluck'd at him to go,  
 He laugh'd, and yielded readily to their wish,  
 For was not Annie with them? and they went.

But after scaling half the weary down,  
 Just where the prone edge of the wood began  
 To feather toward the hollow, all her force  
 Fail'd her; and sighing, 'Let me rest' she said:  
 So Philip rested with her well-content;  
 While all the younger ones with jubilant cries  
 Broke from their elders, and tumultuously  
 Down thro' the whitening hazels made a plunge  
 To the bottom, and dispersed, and bent or broke  
 The lithe reluctant boughs to tear away  
 Their tawny clusters, crying to each other  
 And calling, here and there, about the wood.

But Philip sitting at her side forgot  
 Her presence, and remember'd one dark hour  
 Here in this wood, when like a wounded life  
 He crept into the shadow: at last he said,  
 Lifting his honest forehead, 'Listen, Annie,  
 How merry they are down yonder in the wood.  
 Tired, Annie?' for she did not speak a word.

'Tired?' but her face had fall'n upon  
 her hands;  
 At which, as with a kind of anger in him,  
 'The ship was lost,' he said, 'the ship  
 was lost!  
 No more of that! why should you kill  
 yourself  
 And make them orphans quite?' And  
 Annie said,  
 'I thought not of it: but—I know not  
 why—  
 Their voices make me feel so solitary.'

Then Philip coming somewhat closer  
 spoke:  
 'Annie, there is a thing upon my mind,  
 And it has been upon my mind so long,  
 That tho' I know not when it first came  
 there,  
 I know that it will out at last. O Annie,  
 It is beyond all hope, against all chance,  
 That he who left you ten long years ago  
 Should still be living; well then—let  
 me speak:  
 I grieve to see you poor and wanting  
 help:  
 I cannot help you as I wish to do  
 Unless—they say that women are so  
 quick—  
 Perhaps you know what I would have  
 you know—  
 I wish you for my wife. I fain would  
 prove  
 A father to your children: I do think  
 They love me as a father: I am sure  
 That I love them as if they were mine  
 own;  
 And I believe, if you were fast my wife,  
 That after all these sad uncertain years,  
 We might be still as happy as God grants  
 To any of his creatures. Think upon it:  
 For I am well-to-do—no kin, no care,  
 No burthen, save my care for you and  
 yours:  
 And we have known each other all our  
 lives,  
 And I have loved you longer than you  
 know.'

Then answer'd Annie; tenderly she  
 spoke:  
 'You have been as God's good angel in  
 our house.

God bless you for it, God reward you for  
 it,  
 Philip, with something happier than my-  
 self.  
 Can one love twice? can you be ever  
 loved  
 As Enoch was? what is it that you ask?'  
 'I am content,' he answer'd, 'to be loved  
 A little after Enoch.' 'O,' she cried,  
 Scared as it were, 'dear Philip, wait a  
 while:  
 If Enoch comes—but Enoch will not  
 come—  
 Yet wait a year, a year is not so long:  
 Surely I shall be wiser in a year:  
 O wait a little!' Philip sadly said,  
 'Annie, as I have waited all my life  
 I well may wait a little.' 'Nay,' she  
 cried,  
 'I am bound: you have my promise—  
 in a year:  
 Will you not bide your year as I bide  
 mine?'  
 And Philip answer'd, 'I will bide my  
 year.'

Here both were mute, till Philip glan-  
 cing up  
 Beheld the dead flame of the fallen day  
 Pass from the Danish barrow overhead;  
 Then fearing night and chill for Annie,  
 rose  
 And sent his voice beneath him thro' the  
 wood.  
 Up came the children laden with their  
 spoil;  
 Then all descended to the port, and there  
 At Annie's door he paused and gave his  
 hand,  
 Saying gently, 'Annie, when I spoke to  
 you,  
 That was your hour of weakness. I was  
 wrong,  
 I am always bound to you, but you are  
 free.'  
 Then Annie weeping answer'd, 'I am  
 bound.'

She spoke; and in one moment as it  
 were,  
 While yet she went about her household  
 ways,  
 Ev'n as she dwelt upon his latest words,

That he had loved her longer than she knew,  
 That autumn into autumn flash'd again,  
 And there he stood once more before her face,  
 Claiming her promise. 'Is it a year?' she ask'd.  
 'Yes, if the nuts,' he said, 'be ripe again: Come out and see.' But she — she put him off —  
 So much to look to — such a change — a month —  
 Give her a month — she knew that she was bound —  
 A month — no more. Then Philip with his eyes  
 Full of that lifelong hunger, and his voice  
 Shaking a little like a drunkard's hand,  
 'Take your own time, Annie, take your own time.'  
 And Annie could have wept for pity of him;  
 And yet she held him on delayingly  
 With many a scarce-believable excuse,  
 Trying his truth and his long-sufferance,  
 Till half-another year had slipt away.

By this the lazy gossips of the port,  
 Abhorrent of a calculation crost,  
 Began to chafe as at a personal wrong.  
 Some thought that Philip did but trifle with her;  
 Some that she but held off to draw him on;  
 And others laugh'd at her and Philip too,  
 As simple folk that knew not their own minds,  
 And one, in whom all evil fancies clung  
 Like serpent eggs together, laughingly  
 Would hint at worse in either. Her own son  
 Was silent, tho' he often look'd his wish;  
 But evermore the daughter prest upon her  
 To wed the man so dear to all of them  
 And lift the household out of poverty;  
 And Philip's rosy face contracting grew  
 Careworn and wan; and all these things  
 fell on her  
 Sharp as reproach.

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At last one night it chanced  
 That Annie could not sleep, but earnestly  
 Pray'd for a sign, 'my Enoch, is he gone?'  
 Then compass'd round by the blind wall of night  
 Brook'd not the expectant terror of her heart,  
 Started from bed, and struck herself a light,  
 Then desperately seized the holy Book,  
 Suddenly set it wide to find a sign,  
 Suddenly put her finger on the text,  
 'Under the palm-tree.' That was nothing to her:  
 No meaning there: she closed the Book and slept:  
 When lo! her Enoch sitting on a height,  
 Under a palm-tree, over him the Sun:  
 'He is gone,' she thought, 'he is happy, he is singing  
 Hosanna in the highest: yonder shines  
 The Sun of Righteousness, and these be palms  
 Whereof the happy people strowing cried  
 "Hosanna in the highest!"' Here she woke,  
 Resolved, sent for him and said wildly to him,  
 'There is no reason why we should not wed.'  
 'Then for God's sake,' he answer'd, 'both our sakes,  
 So you will wed me, let it be at once.'

So these were wed and merrily rang the bells,  
 Merrily rang the bells and they were wed.  
 But never merrily beat Annie's heart.  
 A footstep seem'd to fall beside her path,  
 She knew not whence; a whisper on her ear,  
 She knew not what; nor loved she to be left  
 Alone at home, nor ventured out alone.  
 What ail'd her then, that ere she enter'd, often  
 Her hand dwelt lingeringly on the latch,  
 Fearing to enter: Philip thought he knew:  
 Such doubts and fears were common to her state,

Being with child: but when her child  
 was born,  
 Then her new child was as herself re-  
 new'd,  
 Then the new mother came about her  
 heart,  
 Then her good Philip was her all-in-all,  
 And that mysterious instinct wholly died.

And where was Enoch? prosperously  
 sail'd  
 The ship 'Good Fortune,' tho' at setting  
 forth  
 The Biscay, roughly ridging eastward,  
 shook

And almost overwhelm'd her, yet unvest  
 She slipt across the summer of the world,  
 Then after a long tumble about the Cape  
 And frequent interchange of foul and fair,  
 She passing thro' the summer world again,  
 The breath of heaven came continually  
 And sent her sweetly by the golden isles,  
 Till silent in her oriental haven.

There Enoch traded for himself, and  
 bought  
 Quaint monsters for the market of those  
 times,  
 A gilded dragon, also, for the babes.

Less lucky her home-voyage: at first  
 indeed  
 Thro' many a fair sea-circle, day by day,  
 Scarce-rocking, her full-busted figure-  
 head  
 Stared o'er the ripple feathering from  
 her bows:  
 Then follow'd calms, and then winds  
 variable,  
 Then baffling, a long course of them;  
 and last  
 Storm, such as drove her under moon-  
 less heavens  
 Till hard upon the cry of 'breakers'  
 came  
 The crash of ruin, and the loss of all  
 But Enoch and two others. Half the  
 night,  
 Buoy'd upon floating tackle and broken  
 spars,  
 These drifted, stranding on an isle at  
 morn  
 Rich, but the loneliest in a lonely sea.

No want was there of human suste-  
 nance,  
 Soft fruitage, mighty nuts, and nourish-  
 ing roots;  
 Nor save for pity was it hard to take  
 The helpless life so wild that it was tame.  
 There in a seaward-gazing mountain-  
 gorge  
 They built, and thatch'd with leaves of  
 palm, a hut,  
 Half hut, half native cavern. So the  
 three,  
 Set in this Eden of all plenteousness,  
 Dwelt with eternal summer, ill-content.

For one, the youngest, hardly more  
 than boy,  
 Hurt in that night of sudden ruin and  
 wreck,  
 Lay lingering out a five-years' death-in-  
 life.  
 They could not leave him. After he  
 was gone,  
 The two remaining found a fallen stem;  
 And Enoch's comrade, careless of him-  
 self,  
 Fire-hollowing this in Indian fashion, fell  
 Sun-stricken, and that other lived alone.  
 In those two deaths he read God's warn-  
 ing 'wait.'

The mountain wooded to the peak,  
 the lawns  
 And winding glades high up like ways  
 to heaven,  
 The slender coco's drooping crown of  
 plumes,  
 The lightning flash of insect and of  
 bird,  
 The lustre of the long convolvuluses  
 That coil'd around the stately stems, and  
 ran  
 Ev'n to the limit of the land, the glows  
 And glories of the broad belt of the  
 world,  
 All these he saw; but what he fain had  
 seen  
 He could not see, the kindly human face,  
 Nor ever hear a kindly voice, but heard  
 The myriad shriek of wheeling ocean-  
 fowl,  
 The league-long roller thundering on the  
 reef,

The moving whisper of huge trees that  
 branch'd  
 And blossom'd in the zenith, or the  
 sweep  
 Of some precipitous rivulet to the wave,  
 As down the shore he ranged, or all  
 day long  
 Sat often in the seaward-gazing gorge,  
 A shipwreck'd sailor, waiting for a sail:  
 No sail from day to day, but every day  
 The sunrise broken into scarlet shafts  
 Among the palms and ferns and preci-  
 pices;  
 The blaze upon the waters to the east;  
 The blaze upon his island overhead;  
 The blaze upon the waters to the west;  
 Then the great stars that globed them-  
 selves in heaven,  
 The hollower-bellowing ocean, and again  
 The scarlet shafts of sunrise — but no  
 sail.

There often as he watch'd or seem'd  
 to watch,  
 So still, the golden lizard on him paused,  
 A phantom made of many phantoms  
 moved  
 Before him haunting him, or he himself  
 Moved haunting people, things and  
 places, known  
 Far in a darker isle beyond the line;  
 The babes, their babble, Annie, the small  
 house,  
 The climbing street, the mill, the leafy  
 lanes,  
 The peacock-yewtree and the lonely Hall,  
 The horse he drove, the boat he sold, the  
 chill  
 November dawns and dewy-glooming  
 downs,  
 The gentle shower, the smell of dying  
 leaves,  
 And the low moan of leaden-colour'd  
 seas.

Once likewise, in the ringing of his  
 ears,  
 Tho' faintly, merrily — far and far away —  
 He heard the pealing of his parish bells;  
 Then, tho' he knew not wherefore, started  
 up  
 Shuddering, and when the beauteous  
 hateful isle

Return'd upon him, had not his poor  
 heart  
 Spoken with That, which being every-  
 where  
 Lets none, who speaks with Him, seem  
 all alone,  
 Surely the man had died of solitude.

Thus over Enoch's early-silvering head  
 The sunny and rainy seasons came and  
 went  
 Year after year. His hopes to see his  
 own,  
 And pace the sacred old familiar fields,  
 Not yet had perish'd, when his lonely  
 doom  
 Came suddenly to an end. Another ship  
 (She wanted water) blown by baffling  
 winds,  
 Like the 'Good Fortune,' from her des-  
 tined course,  
 Stay'd by this isle, not knowing where  
 she lay:  
 For since the mate had seen at early  
 dawn  
 Across a break on the mist-wreathen isle  
 The silent water slipping from the hills,  
 They sent a crew that landing burst away  
 In search of stream or fount, and fill'd  
 the shores  
 With clamour. Downward from his  
 mountain gorge  
 Stept the long-hair'd long-bearded soli-  
 tary,  
 Brown, looking hardly human, strangely  
 clad,  
 Muttering and mumbling, idiotlike it  
 seem'd,  
 With inarticulate rage, and making signs  
 They knew not what: and yet he led  
 the way  
 To where the rivulets of sweet water  
 ran;  
 And ever as he mingled with the crew,  
 And heard them talking, his long-  
 bounden tongue  
 Was loosen'd, till he made them under-  
 stand;  
 Whom, when their casks were fill'd they  
 took aboard:  
 And there the tale he utter'd brokenly,  
 Scarce-credited at first but more and  
 more,

Amazed and melted all who listen'd to it :  
 And clothes they gave him and free pas-  
 sage home ;  
 But oft he work'd among the rest and  
 shook  
 His isolation from him. None of these  
 Came from his country, or could answer  
 him,  
 If question'd, aught of what he cared to  
 know.  
 And dull the voyage was with long  
 delays,  
 The vessel scarce sea-worthy ; but ever-  
 more  
 His fancy fled before the lazy wind  
 Returning, till beneath a clouded moon  
 He like a lover down thro' all his blood  
 Drew in the dewy meadowy morning-  
 breath  
 Of England, blown across her ghostly  
 wall :  
 And that same morning officers and  
 men  
 Levied a kindly tax upon themselves,  
 Pitying the lonely man, and gave him it :  
 Then moving up the coast they landed  
 him,  
 Ev'n in that harbour whence he sail'd  
 before.

There Enoch spoke no word to any  
 one,  
 But homeward — home — what home ?  
 had he a home ?  
 His home, he walk'd. Bright was that  
 afternoon,  
 Sunny but chill ; till drawn thro' either  
 chasm,  
 Where either haven open'd on the  
 deeps,  
 Roll'd a sea-haze and whelm'd the world  
 in gray ;  
 Cut off the length of highway on before,  
 And left but narrow breadth to left and  
 right  
 Of wither'd holt or tilth or pasturage.  
 On the nigh-naked tree the robin piped  
 Disconsolate, and thro' the dripping  
 haze  
 The dead weight of the dead leaf bore it  
 down :  
 Thicker the drizzle grew, deeper the  
 gloom ;

Last, as it seem'd, a great mist-blotted  
 light  
 Flared on him, and he came upon the  
 place.

Then down the long street having  
 slowly stolen,  
 His heart foreshadowing all calamity,  
 His eyes upon the stones, he reach'd the  
 home  
 Where Annie lived and loved him, and  
 his babes  
 In those far-off seven happy years were  
 born ;  
 But finding neither light nor murmur  
 there  
 (A bill of sale gleam'd thro' the drizzle)  
 crept  
 Still downward thinking ' dead ' or dead  
 to me !'

Down to the pool and narrow wharf  
 he went,  
 Seeking a tavern which of old he knew,  
 A front of timber-crost antiquity,  
 So propt, worm-eaten, ruinously old,  
 He thought it must have gone ; but he  
 was gone  
 Who kept it ; and his widow Miriam  
 Lane,  
 With daily-dwindling profits held the  
 house ;  
 A haunt of brawling seamen once, but now  
 Still, with yet a bed for wandering  
 men.  
 There Enoch rested silent many days.

But Miriam Lane was good and garru-  
 lous,  
 Nor let him be, but often breaking in,  
 Told him, with other annals of the port,  
 Not knowing — Enoch was so brown, so  
 bow'd,  
 So broken — all the story of his house.  
 His baby's death, her growing poverty,  
 How Philip put her little ones to school,  
 And kept them in it, his long wooing  
 her,  
 Her slow consent, and marriage, and the  
 birth  
 Of Philip's child : and o'er his counte-  
 nance  
 No shadow past, nor motion : any one,



Regarding, well had deem'd he felt the  
 tale  
 Less than the teller: only when she  
 closed,  
 ' Enoch, poor man, was cast away and  
 lost,'  
 He, shaking his gray head pathetically,  
 Repeated muttering ' cast away and lost; '  
 Again in deeper inward whispers ' lost! '

But Enoch yearn'd to see her face  
 again;  
 ' If I might look on her sweet face again  
 And know that she is happy.' So the  
 thought  
 Haunted and harass'd him, and drove  
 him forth,  
 At evening when the dull November day  
 Was growing duller twilight, to the hill.  
 There he sat down gazing on all below;  
 There did a thousand memories roll upon  
 him,  
 Unspeaking for sadness. By and by  
 The ruddy square of comfortable light,  
 Far-blazing from the rear of Philip's  
 house,  
 Allured him, as the beacon-blaze allures  
 The bird of passage, till he madly strikes  
 Against it, and beats out his weary life.

For Philip's dwelling fronted on the  
 street,  
 The latest house to landward; but be-  
 hind,  
 With one small gate that open'd on the  
 waste,  
 Flourish'd a little garden square and  
 wall'd:  
 And in it throve an ancient evergreen,  
 A yewtree, and all round it ran a walk  
 Of shingle, and a walk divided it:  
 But Enoch shunn'd the middle walk and  
 stole  
 Up by the wall, behind the yew; and  
 thence  
 That which he better might have shunn'd,  
 if griefs  
 Like his have worse or better, Enoch saw.

For cups and silver on the burnish'd  
 board  
 Sparkled and shone; so genial was the  
 hearth:

And on the right hand of the hearth he  
 saw  
 Philip, the slighted suitor of old times,  
 Stout, rosy, with his babe across his  
 knees;  
 And o'er her second father stooped a  
 girl,  
 A later but a loftier Annie Lee,  
 Fair-hair'd and tall, and from her lifted  
 hand  
 Dangled a length of ribbon and a ring  
 To tempt the babe, who rear'd his creasy  
 arms,  
 Caught at and ever miss'd it, and they  
 laugh'd;  
 And on the left hand of the hearth he  
 saw  
 The mother glancing often toward her  
 babe,  
 But turning now and then to speak with  
 him,  
 Her son, who stood beside her tall and  
 strong,  
 And saying that which pleased him, for  
 he smiled.

Now when the dead man come to life  
 beheld  
 His wife his wife no more, and saw the  
 babe  
 Hers, yet not his, upon the father's knee,  
 And all the warmth, the peace, the  
 happiness,  
 And his own children tall and beautiful,  
 And him, that other, reigning in his place,  
 Lord of his rights and of his children's  
 love, —  
 Then he, tho' Miriam Lane had told him  
 all,  
 Because things seen are mightier than  
 things heard,  
 Stagger'd and shook, holding the branch,  
 and fear'd  
 To send abroad a shrill and terrible cry,  
 Which in one moment, like the blast of  
 doom,  
 Would shatter all the happiness of the  
 hearth.

He therefore turning softly like a thief,  
 Lest the harsh shingle should grate under  
 foot,  
 And feeling all along the garden-wall,

Lest he should swoon and tumble and be  
found,  
Crept to the gate, and open'd it, and  
closed,  
As lightly as a sick man's chamber-door,  
Behind him, and came out upon the  
waste.

And there he would have knelt, but  
that his knees  
Were feeble, so that falling prone he dug  
His fingers into the wet earth, and  
pray'd.

'Too hard to bear! why did they take  
me thence?  
O God Almighty, blessed Saviour, Thou  
That didst uphold me on my lonely isle,  
Uphold me, Father, in my loneliness  
A little longer! aid me, give me strength  
Not to tell her, never to let her know.  
Help me not to break in upon her peace.  
My children too! must I not speak to  
these?  
They know me not. I should betray  
myself.  
Never: No father's kiss for me — the girl  
So like her mother, and the boy, my  
son.'

There speech and thought and nature  
fail'd a little,  
And he lay tranced; but when he rose  
and paced  
Back toward his solitary home again,  
All down the long and narrow street he  
went  
Beating it in upon his weary brain,  
As tho' it were the burthen of a song,  
'Not to tell her, never to let her know.'

He was not all unhappy. His resolve  
Uphore him, and firm faith, and ever-  
more  
Prayer from a living source within the  
will,  
And beating up thro' all the bitter world,  
Like fountains of sweet water in the sea,  
Kept him a living soul. 'This miller's  
wife,'  
He said to Miriam, 'that you spoke about,  
Has she no fear that her first husband  
lives?'

'Ay, ay, poor soul,' said Miriam, 'fear  
enow!

If you could tell her you had seen him  
dead,

Why, that would be her comfort; and  
he thought

'After the Lord has call'd me she shall  
know.

I wait His time,' and Enoch set himself,  
Scorning an alms, to work whereby to live.  
Almost to all things could he turn his  
hand.

Cooper he was and carpenter, and wrought  
To make the boatmen fishing-nets, or  
help'd

At lading and unlading the tall barks,  
That brought the stinted commerce of  
those days;

Thus earn'd a scanty living for himself:  
Yet since he did but labour for himself,  
Work without hope, there was not life  
in it

Whereby the man could live; and as the  
year

Roll'd itself round again to meet the day  
When Enoch had return'd, a languor  
came

Upon him, gentle sickness, gradually  
Weakening the man, till he could do no  
more,

But kept the house, his chair, and last his  
bed.

And Enoch bore his weakness cheerfully.  
For sure no gladlier does the stranded  
wreck

See thro' the gray skirts of a lifting squall  
The boat that bears the hope of life  
approach

To save the life despair'd of, than he saw  
Death dawning on him, and the close of  
all.

For thro' that dawning gleam'd a kind-  
lier hope

On Enoch thinking, 'after I am gone,  
Then may she learn I lov'd her to the  
last.'

He call'd aloud for Miriam Lane and said,  
'Woman, I have a secret — only swear,  
Before I tell you — swear upon the book  
Not to reveal it, till you see me dead.'

'Dead,' clamour'd the good woman, 'hear  
him talk!

I warrant, man, that we shall bring you round.'

'Swear,' added Enoch sternly, 'on the book.'

And on the book, half-frighted, Miriam swore.

Then Enoch rolling his gray eyes upon her, 'Did you know Enoch Arden of this town?'

'Know him?' she said, 'I knew him far away.'

Ay, ay, I mind him coming down the street;

Held his head high, and cared for no man, he.'

Slowly and sadly Enoch answer'd her:

'His head is low, and no man cares for him.

I think I have not three days more to live; I am the man.' At which the woman gave a half-incredulous, half-hysterical cry.

'You Arden, you! nay, — sure he was a foot

Higher than you be.' Enoch said again, 'My God has bow'd me down to what I am;

My grief and solitude have broken me; Nevertheless, know you that I am he Who married — but that name has twice been changed —

I married her who married Philip Ray. Sit, listen.' Then he told her of his voyage,

His wreck, his lonely life, his coming back, His gazing in on Annie, his resolve, And how he kept it. As the woman heard,

Fast flow'd the current of her easy tears, While in her heart she yearn'd incessantly To rush abroad all round the little haven, Proclaiming Enoch Arden and his woes; But awed and promise-bounden she forbore,

Saying only, 'See your bairns before you go!

Eh, let me fetch 'em, Arden,' and arose Eager to bring them down, for Enoch hung

A moment on her words, but then replied:

'Woman, disturb me not now at the last,

But let me hold my purpose till I die.

Sit down again; mark me and understand, While I have power to speak. I charge you now,

When you shall see her, tell her that I died Blessing her, praying for her, loving her; Save for the bar between us, loving her As when she laid her head beside my own. And tell my daughter Annie, whom I saw So like her mother, that my latest breath Was spent in blessing her and praying for her.

And tell my son that I died blessing him. And say to Philip that I blest him too; He never meant us any thing but good. But if my children care to see me dead, Who hardly knew me living, let them come,

I am their father; but she must not come, For my dead face would vex her after-life. And now there is but one of all my blood Who will embrace me in the world-to-be. This hair is his: she cut it off and gave it, And I have borne it with me all these years,

And thought to bear it with me to my grave;

But now my mind is changed, for I shall see him,

My babe in bliss: wherefore when I am gone,

Take, give her this, for it may comfort her: It will moreover be a token to her, That I am he.'

He ceased; and Miriam Lane Made such a voluble answer promising all, That once again he roll'd his eyes upon her

Repeating all he wish'd, and once again She promised.

Then the third night after this, While Enoch slumber'd motionless and pale,

And Miriam watch'd and dozed at intervals,

There came so loud a calling of the sea, That all the houses in the haven rang.

He woke, he rose, he spread his arms abroad

Crying with a loud voice 'A sail! a sail! I am saved;' and so fell back and spoke no more.

So past the strong heroic soul away.  
And when they buried him the little  
port  
Had seldom seen a costlier funeral.

THE BROOK.

HERE, by this brook, we parted; I to the  
East

And he for Italy — too late — too late :  
One whom the strong sons of the world  
despise;

For lucky rhymes to him were scrip and  
share,

And mellow metres more than cent for  
cent;

Nor could he understand how money  
breeds,

Thought it a dead thing; yet himself  
could make

The thing that is not as the thing that  
is.

O had he lived! In our schoolbooks we  
say,

Of those that held their heads above the  
crowd,

They flourished then or then; but life in  
him

Could scarce be said to flourish, only  
touch'd

On such a time as goes before the leaf,  
When all the wood stands in a mist of  
green,

And nothing perfect: yet the brook he  
loved,

For which, in branding summers of  
Bengal,

Or ev'n the sweet half-English Neilgherry  
air

I panted, seems, as I re-listen to it,  
Prattling the primrose fancies of the boy,

To me that loved him; for 'O brook,'  
he says,

'O babbling brook,' says Edmund in his  
rhyme,

'Whence come you?' and the brook, why  
not? replies.

I come from haunts of coot and hern,  
I make a sudden sally,  
And sparkle out among the fern,  
To bicker down a valley.

By thirty hills I hurry down,  
Or slip between the ridges,  
By twenty thorns, a little town,  
And half a hundred bridges.

Till last by Philip's farm I flow  
To join the brimming river,  
For men may come and men may go,  
But I go on for ever.

'Poor lad, he died at Florence, quite  
worn out,

Travelling to Naples. There is Darnley  
bridge,

It has more ivy; there the river; and  
there

Stands Philip's farm where brook and  
river meet.

I chatter over stony ways,  
In little sharps and trebles,  
I bubble into eddying bays,  
I babble on the pebbles.

With many a curve my banks I fret  
By many a field and fallow,  
And many a fairy foreland set  
With willow-weed and mallow.

I chatter, chatter, as I flow  
To join the brimming river,  
For men may come and men may go,  
But I go on for ever.

'But Philip chatter'd more than brook  
or bird;

Old Philip; all about the fields you  
caught

His weary daylong chirping, like the  
dry

High-elbow'd grigs that leap in summer  
grass.

I wind about, and in and out,  
With here a blossom sailing,  
And here and there a lusty trout,  
And here and there a grayling,

And here and there a foamy flake  
Upon me, as I travel  
With many a silvery waterbreak  
Above the golden gravel,

And draw them all along, and flow  
To join the brimming river,  
For men may come and men may go,  
But I go on for ever.

'O darling Katie Willows, his one child!  
 A maiden of our century, yet most meek;  
 A daughter of our meadows, yet not coarse;  
 Straight, but as lissome as a hazel wand;  
 Her eyes a bashful azure, and her hair  
 In gloss and hue the chestnut, when the shell  
 Divides threefold to show the fruit within.

'Sweet Katie, once I did her a good turn,  
 Her and her far-off cousin and betrothed,  
 James Willows, of one name and heart  
 with her.  
 For here I came, twenty years back —  
 the week  
 Before I parted with poor Edmund; crost  
 By that old bridge which, half in ruins  
 then,  
 Still makes a hoary eyebrow for the gleam  
 Beyond it, where the waters marry — crost,  
 Whistling a random bar of Bonny Doon,  
 And push'd at Philip's garden-gate. The  
 gate,  
 Half-parted from a weak and scolding  
 hinge,  
 Stuck; and he clamour'd from a case-  
 ment, "Run"  
 To Katie somewhere in the walks below,  
 "Run, Katie!" Katie never ran: she  
 moved  
 To meet me, winding under woodbine  
 bowers,  
 A little flutter'd, with her eyelids down,  
 Fresh apple-blossom, blushing for a boon.

'What was it? less of sentiment than  
 sense  
 Had Katie; not illiterate; nor of those  
 Who dabbling in the fount of fictive tears,  
 And nursed by mealy-mouth'd philan-  
 thropies,  
 Divorce the Feeling from her mate the  
 Deed.

'She told me. She and James had  
 quarrell'd. Why?  
 What cause of quarrel? None, she said,  
 no cause;  
 James had no cause: but when I prest  
 the cause,

I learnt that James had flickering jeal-  
 ousies  
 Which anger'd her. Who anger'd James?  
 I said.  
 But Katie snatch'd her eyes at once from  
 mine,  
 And sketching with her slender pointed  
 foot  
 Some figure like a wizard pentagram  
 On garden gravel, let my query pass  
 Unclaim'd, in flushing silence, till I ask'd  
 If James were coming. "Coming every  
 day."  
 She answer'd, "ever longing to explain,  
 But evermore her father came across  
 With some long-winded tale, and broke  
 him short;  
 And James departed vext with him and  
 her."  
 How could I help her? "Would I — was  
 it wrong?"  
 (Claspt hands and that petitionary grace  
 Of sweet seventæen subdued me ere she  
 spoke)  
 "O would I take her father for one hour,  
 For one half-hour, and let him talk to me!"  
 And even while she spoke, I saw where  
 James  
 Made toward us, like a wader in the surf,  
 Beyond the brook, waist-deep in meadow-  
 sweet.

'O Katie, what I suffer'd for your sake!  
 For in I went, and call'd old Philip out  
 To show the farm: full willingly he rose:  
 He led me thro' the short sweet-smelling  
 lanes  
 Of his wheat-suburb, babbling as he went.  
 He praised his land, his horses, his  
 machines;  
 He praised his ploughs, his cows, his  
 hogs, his dogs;  
 He praised his hens, his geese, his guinea-  
 hens;  
 His pigeons, who in session on their roofs  
 Approved him, bowing at their own  
 deserts:  
 Then from the plaintive mother's teat he  
 took  
 Her blind and shuddering puppies, nam-  
 ing each,  
 And naming those, his friends, for whom  
 they were:

Then crost the common into Darnley  
 chase  
 To show Sir Arthur's deer. In copse  
 and fern  
 Twinkled the innumerable ear and tail.  
 Then, seated on a serpent-rooted beech,  
 He pointed out a pasturing colt, and  
 said:  
 "That was the four-year-old I sold the  
 Squire."  
 And there he told a long long-winded tale  
 Of how the Squire had seen the colt at  
 grass,  
 And how it was the thing his daughter  
 wish'd,  
 And how he sent the bailiff to the farm  
 To learn the price, and what the price he  
 ask'd,  
 And how the bailiff swore that he was  
 mad,  
 But he stood firm; and so the matter  
 hung;  
 He gave them line: and five days after  
 that  
 He met the bailiff at the Golden Fleece,  
 Who then and there had offer'd some-  
 thing more,  
 But he stood firm; and so the matter  
 hung;  
 He knew the man; the colt would fetch  
 its price;  
 He gave them line: and how by chance  
 at last  
 (It might be May or April, he forgot,  
 The last of April or the first of May)  
 He found the bailiff riding by the farm,  
 And, talking from the point, he drew  
 him in,  
 And there he mellow'd all his heart with  
 ale,  
 Until they closed a bargain, hand in hand.

'Then, while I breathed in sight of  
 haven, he,  
 Poor fellow, could he help it? recom-  
 menced,  
 And ran thro' all the coltish chronicle,  
 Wild Will, Black Bess, Tantivy, Tallyho,  
 Reform, White Rose, Bellerophon, the  
 Jilt,  
 Arbaces, and Phenomenon, and the rest,  
 Till, not to die a listener, I arose,  
 And with me Philip, talking still; and so

We turn'd our foreheads from the falling  
 sun,  
 And following our own shadows thrice  
 as long  
 As when they follow'd us from Philip's  
 door,  
 Arrived, and found the sun of sweet con-  
 tent  
 Re-risen in Katie's eyes, and all things  
 well.

I steal by lawns and grassy plots,  
 I slide by hazel covers;  
 I move the sweet forget-me-nots  
 That grow for happy lovers.

I slip, I slide, I gloom, I glance,  
 Among my skimming swallows;  
 I make the netted sunbeam dance  
 Against my sandy shallows.

I murmur under moon and stars  
 In brambly wildernesses;  
 I linger by my shingly bars;  
 I loiter round my cresses;

And out again I curve and flow  
 To join the brimming river,  
 For men may come and men may go,  
 But I go on for ever.

Yes, men may come and go; and these  
 are gone,  
 All gone. My dearest brother, Edmund,  
 sleeps,  
 Not by the well-known stream and rustic  
 spire,  
 But unfamiliar Arno, and the dome  
 Of Brunelleschi; sleeps in peace: and he,  
 Poor Philip, of all his lavish waste of  
 words  
 Remains the lean P. W. on his tomb:  
 I scraped the lichen from it: Katie walks  
 By the long wash of Australasian seas  
 Far off, and holds her head to other  
 stars,  
 And breathes in April-autumns. All are  
 gone.'

So Lawrence Aylmer, seated on a stile  
 In the long hedge, and rolling in his  
 mind  
 Old waifs of rhyme, and bowing o'er the  
 brook  
 A tonsured head in middle age forlorn,



Mused, and was mute. On a sudden a  
 low breath  
 Of tender air made tremble in the  
 hedge  
 The fragile bindweed-bells and briony  
 rings;  
 And he look'd up. There stood a maiden  
 near,  
 Waiting to pass. In much amaze he  
 stared  
 On eyes a bashful azure, and on hair  
 In gloss and hue the chestnut, when the  
 shell  
 Divides threefold to show the fruit within :  
 Then, wondering, ask'd her, 'Are you  
 from the farm?'  
 'Yes,' answer'd she. 'Pray stay a little :  
 pardon me;  
 What do they call you?' 'Katie.' 'That  
 were strange.  
 What surname?' 'Willows.' 'No!'  
 'That is my name.'  
 'Indeed!' and here he look'd so self-  
 perplext,  
 That Katie laugh'd, and laughing blush'd,  
 till he  
 Laugh'd also, but as one before he  
 wakes,  
 Who feels a glimmering strangeness in  
 his dream.  
 Then looking at her: 'Too happy, fresh  
 and fair,  
 Too fresh and fair in our sad world's best  
 bloom,  
 To be the ghost of one who bore your  
 name  
 About these meadows, twenty years ago.'

'Have you not heard?' said Katie, 'we  
 came back.  
 We bought the farm we tenanted be-  
 fore.  
 Am I so like her? so they said on  
 board.  
 Sir, if you knew her in her English  
 days,  
 My mother, as it seems you did, the days  
 That most she loves to talk of, come  
 with me.  
 My brother James is in the harvest-  
 field :  
 But she—you will be welcome—O, come  
 in!'

## AYLMER'S FIELD.

1793.

DUST are our frames; and, gilded dust,  
 our pride  
 Looks only for a moment whole and  
 sound;  
 Like that long-buried body of the king,  
 Found lying with his urns and ornaments,  
 Which at a touch of light, an air of  
 heaven,  
 Slipt into ashes, and was found no more.

Here is a story which in rougher shape  
 Came from a grizzled cripple, whom I  
 saw  
 Sunning himself in a waste field alone—  
 Old, and a mine of memories—who had  
 served,  
 Long since, a bygone Rector of the place,  
 And been himself a part of what he told.

SIR AYLMER AYLMER, that almighty  
 man,  
 The county God—in whose capacious  
 hall,  
 Hung with a hundred shields, the family  
 tree  
 Sprang from the midriff of a prostrate  
 king—  
 Whose blazing wyvern weathercock'd the  
 spire,  
 Stood from his walls and wing'd his entry-  
 gates  
 And swang besides on many a windy  
 sign—  
 Whose eyes from under a pyramidal head  
 Saw from his windows nothing save his  
 own—  
 What lovelier of his own had he than  
 her,  
 His only child, his Edith, whom he loved  
 As heiress and not heir regretfully?  
 But 'he that marries her marries her  
 name'—  
 This fiat somewhat soothed himself and  
 wife,  
 His wife a faded beauty of the Baths,  
 Insipid as the Queen upon a card;  
 Her all of thought and bearing hardly  
 more  
 Than his own shadow in a sickly sun.

A land of hops and poppy-mingled  
 corn,  
 Little about it stirring save a brook !  
 A sleepy land, where under the same  
 wheel  
 The same old rut would deepen year by  
 year ;  
 Where almost all the village had one  
 name ;  
 Where Aylmer followed Aylmer at the  
 Hall  
 And Averill Averill at the Rectory  
 Thrice over ; so that Rectory and Hall,  
 Bound in an immemorial intimacy,  
 Were open to each other ; tho' to dream  
 That Love could bind them closer well  
 had made  
 The hoar hair of the Baronet bristle up  
 With horror, worse than had he heard  
 his priest  
 Preach an inverted scripture, sons of  
 men  
 Daughters of God ; so sleepy was the  
 land.

And might not Averill, had he will'd  
 it so,  
 Somewhere beneath his own low range  
 of roofs,  
 Have also set his many-shielded tree ?  
 There was an Aylmer-Averill marriage  
 once,  
 When the red rose was redder than itself,  
 And York's white rose as red as Lancas-  
 ter's,  
 With wounded peace which each had  
 prick'd to death.  
 'Not proven,' Averill said, or laughingly,  
 'Some other race of Averills'—prov'n  
 or no,  
 What cared he? what, if other or the  
 same?  
 He lean'd not on his fathers but himself.  
 But Leolin, his brother, living oft  
 With Averill, and a year or two before  
 Call'd to the bar, but ever call'd away  
 By one low voice to one dear neighbour-  
 hood,  
 Would often, in his walks with Edith,  
 claim  
 A distant kinship to the gracious blood  
 That shook the heart of Edith hearing  
 him.

Sanguine he was: a but less vivid hue  
 Than of that islet in the chestnut-bloom  
 Flamed in his cheek; and eager eyes,  
 that still  
 Took joyful note of all things joyful,  
 beam'd  
 Beneath a manelike mass of rolling gold,  
 Their best and brightest, when they dwelt  
 on hers,  
 Edith, whose pensive beauty, perfect else,  
 But subject to the season or the mood,  
 Shone like a mystic star between the less  
 And greater glory varying to and fro,  
 We know not wherefore; bounteously  
 made,  
 And yet so finely, that a troublous touch  
 Thinn'd, or would seem to thin her in a  
 day,  
 A joyous to dilate, as toward the light.  
 And these had been together from the  
 first.  
 Leolin's first nurse was, five years after,  
 hers:  
 So much the boy foreran; but when his  
 date  
 Doubled her own, for want of playmates,  
 he  
 (Since Averill was a decad and a half  
 His elder, and their parents underground)  
 Had tost his ball and flown his kite, and  
 roll'd  
 His hoop to pleasure Edith, with her dipt  
 Against the rush of the air in the prone  
 swing,  
 Made blossom-ball or daisy-chain, ar-  
 ranged  
 Her garden, sow'd her name and kept  
 it green  
 In living letters, told her fairy-tales,  
 Show'd her the fairy footings on the  
 grass,  
 The little dells of cowslip, fairy palms,  
 The petty marestail forest, fairy pines,  
 Or from the tiny pitted target blew  
 What look'd a flight of fairy arrows aim'd  
 All at one mark, all hitting: make-be-  
 lieves  
 For Edith and himself: or else he forged,  
 But that was later, boyish histories  
 Of battle, bold adventure, dungeon,  
 wreck,  
 Flights, terrors, sudden rescues, and true  
 love

Crown'd after trial; sketches rude and faint,  
 But where a passion yet unborn perhaps  
 Lay hidden as the music of the moon  
 Sleeps in the plain eggs of the nightin-  
 gale.  
 And thus together, save for college-times  
 Or Temple-eaten terms, a couple, fair  
 As ever painter painted, poet sang,  
 Or Heaven in lavish bounty moulded,  
 grew.  
 And more and more, the maiden woman-  
 grown,  
 He wasted hours with Averill; there,  
 when first  
 The tented winter-field was broken up  
 Into that phalanx of the summer spears  
 That soon should wear the garland;  
 there again  
 When burr and bine were gather'd;  
 lastly there  
 At Christmas; ever welcome at the Hall,  
 On whose dull sameness his full tide of  
 youth  
 Broke with a phosphorescence charming  
 even  
 My lady; and the Baronet yet had laid  
 No bar between them: dull and self-  
 involved,  
 Tall and erect, but bending from his  
 height  
 With\* half-allowing smiles for all the  
 world,  
 And mighty courteous in the main—  
 his pride  
 Lay deeper than to wear it as his ring—  
 He, like an Aylmer in his Aylmerism,  
 Would care no more for Leolin's walking  
 with her  
 Than for his old Newfoundland's, when  
 they ran  
 To loose him at the stables, for he rose  
 Twofooted at the limit of his chain,  
 Roaring to make a third: and how  
 should Love,  
 Whom the cross-lightnings of four  
 chance-met eyes  
 Flash into fiery life from nothing, follow  
 Such dear familiarities of dawn?  
 Seldom, but when he does, Master of all.  
 So these young hearts not knowing  
 that they loved,

Not she at least, nor conscious of a bar  
 Between them, nor by plight or broken  
 ring  
 Bound, but an immemorial intimacy,  
 Wander'd at will, and oft accompanied  
 By Averill: his, a brother's love, that  
 hung  
 With wings of brooding shelter o'er her  
 peace,  
 Might have been other, save for Leo-  
 lin's—  
 Who knows? but so they wander'd, hour  
 by hour  
 Gather'd the blossom that rebloom'd,  
 and drank  
 The magic cup that fill'd itself anew.

A whisper half reveal'd her to herself.  
 For out beyond her lodges, where the  
 brook  
 Vocal, with here and there a silence, ran  
 By sallow rims, arose the labourers'  
 homes,  
 A frequent haunt of Edith, on low knolls  
 That dimpling died into each other, huts  
 At random scatter'd, each a nest in  
 bloom.  
 Her art, her hand, her counsel all had  
 wrought  
 About them: here was one that, sum-  
 mer-blanch'd,  
 Was parcel-bearded with the traveller's-  
 joy  
 In Autumn, parcel ivy-clad; and here  
 The warm-blue breathings of a hidden  
 hearth  
 Broke from a bower of vine and honey-  
 suckle:  
 One look'd all rosetree, and another wore  
 A close-set robe of jasmine sown with  
 stars:  
 This had a rosy sea of gillyflowers  
 About it; this, a milky-way on earth,  
 Like visions in the Northern dreamer's  
 heavens,  
 A lily-avenue climbing to the doors;  
 One, almost to the martin-haunted eaves  
 A summer burial deep in hollyhocks;  
 Each, its own charm; and Edith's every-  
 where;  
 And Edith ever visitant with him,  
 He but less loved than Edith, of her  
 poor:

For she — so lowly-lovely and so loving,  
 Queenly responsive when the loyal hand  
 Rose from the clay it work'd in as she  
     past,  
 Not sowing hedgerow texts and passing  
     by,  
 Nor dealing goodly counsel from a height  
 That makes the lowest hate it, but a  
     voice  
 Of comfort and an open hand of help,  
 A splendid presence flattering the poor  
     roofs  
 Revered as theirs, but kindlier than  
     themselves  
 To ailing wife or wailing infancy  
 Or old bedridden palsy, — was adored;  
 He, loved for her and for himself. A  
     grasp  
 Having the warmth and muscle of the  
     heart,  
 A childly way with children, and a laugh  
 Ringing like proven golden coinage true,  
 Were no false passport to that easy  
     realm,  
 Where once with Leolin at her side the  
     girl,  
 Nursing a child, and turning to the  
     warmth  
 The tender pink five-beaded baby-soles,  
 Heard the good mother softly whisper  
 'Bless,  
 God bless 'em: marriages are made in  
     Heaven.'

A flash of semi-jealousy clear'd it to  
 her.

My lady's Indian kinsman unannounced  
 With half a score of swarthy faces came.  
 His own, tho' keen and bold and soldierly  
 Sear'd by the close ecliptic, was not fair;  
 Fairer his talk, a tongue that ruled the  
     hour,  
 Tho' seeming boastful: so when first he  
     dash'd  
 Into the chronicle of a deedful day,  
 Sir Aylmer half forgot his lazy smile  
 Of patron 'Good! my lady's kinsman!  
     good!'  
 My lady with her fingers interlock'd,  
 And rotatory thumbs on silken knees,  
 Call'd all her vital spirits into each ear  
 To listen: unawares they flitted off,

Busying themselves about the flowerage  
 That stood from out a stiff brocade in  
     which,  
 The meteor of a splendid season, she,  
 Once with this kinsman, ah so long ago,  
 Stept thro' the stately minuet of those  
     days:  
 But Edith's eager fancy hurried with  
     him  
 Snatch'd thro' the perilous passes of his  
     life:  
 Till Leolin ever watchful of her eye,  
 Hated him with a momentary hate.  
 Wife-hunting, as the rumour ran, was  
     he:  
 I know not, for he spoke not, only  
     shower'd  
 His oriental gifts on every one  
 And most on Edith: like a storm he  
     came,  
 And shook the house, and like a storm  
     he went.

Among the gifts he left her (possibly  
 He flow'd and ebb'd uncertain, to return  
 When others had been tested) there was  
     one,  
 A dagger, in rich sheath with jewels  
     on it  
 Sprinkled about in gold that branch'd  
     itself  
 Fine as ice-ferns on January panes \*  
 Made by a breath. I know not whence  
     at first,  
 Nor of what race, the work; but as he  
     told  
 The story, storming a hill-fort of thieves  
 He got it; for their captain after fight,  
 His comrades having fought their last  
     below,  
 Was climbing up the valley; at whom  
     he shot:  
 Down from the beetling crag to which  
     he clung  
 Tumbled the tawny rascal at his feet,  
 This dagger with him, which when now  
     admired  
 By Edith whom his pleasure was to  
     please,  
 At once the costly Sahib yielded to her.

And Leolin, coming after he was gone,  
 Tost over all her presents petulantly:

And when she show'd the wealthy scab-  
 bard, saying  
 'Look what a lovely piece of workman-  
 ship!' Slight was his answer, 'Well — I care  
 not for it :'  
 Then playing with the blade he prick'd  
 his hand,  
 'A gracious gift to give a lady, this!'  
 'But would it be more gracious,' ask'd  
 the girl,  
 'Were I to give this gift of his to one  
 That is no lady?' 'Gracious? No,'  
 said he.  
 'Me? — but I cared not for it. O par-  
 don me,  
 I seem to be ungraciousness itself.'  
 'Take it,' she added sweetly, 'tho' his  
 gift;  
 For I am more ungracious ev'n than you,  
 I care not for it either;' and he said  
 'Why then I love it:' but Sir Aylmer  
 past,  
 And neither loved nor liked the thing  
 he heard.

The next day came a neighbour.  
 Blues and reds  
 They talk'd of: blues were sure of it, he  
 thought:  
 Then of the latest fox — where started  
 — kill'd  
 In such a bottom: 'Peter had the brush,  
 My Peter, first:' and did Sir Aylmer  
 know  
 That great pock-pitten fellow had been  
 caught?  
 Then made his pleasure echo, hand to  
 hand,  
 And rolling as it were the substance of it  
 Between his palms a moment up and  
 down —  
 'The birds were warm, the birds were  
 warm upon him;  
 We have him now:' and had Sir Ayl-  
 mer heard —  
 Nay, but he must — the land was ring-  
 ing of it —  
 This blacksmith border-marriage — one  
 they knew —  
 Raw from the nursery — who could trust  
 a child?  
 That cursed France with her egalities!

And did Sir Aylmer (deferentially  
 With nearing chair and lower'd accent)  
 think —  
 For people talk'd — that it was wholly  
 wise  
 To let that handsome fellow Averill walk  
 So freely with his daughter? people  
 talk'd —  
 The boy might get a notion into him;  
 The girl might be entangled ere she  
 knew.  
 Sir Aylmer Aylmer slowly stiffening  
 spoke:  
 'The girl and boy, Sir, know their differ-  
 ences!'  
 'Good,' said his friend, 'but watch!'  
 and he, 'Enough,  
 More than enough, Sir! I can guard my  
 own.'  
 They parted, and Sir Aylmer Aylmer  
 watch'd.

Pale, for on her the thunders of the  
 house  
 Had fallen first, was Edith that same  
 night;  
 Pale as the Jephtha's daughter, a rough  
 piece  
 Of early rigid colour, under which  
 Withdrawing by the counter door to that  
 Which Leolin open'd, she cast back upon  
 him  
 A piteous glance, and vanish'd. He, as  
 one  
 Caught in a burst of unexpected storm,  
 And pelted with outrageous epithets,  
 Turning beheld the Powers of the House  
 On either side the hearth, indignant; her,  
 Cooling her false cheek with a feather fan,  
 Him, glaring, by his own stale devil  
 spurr'd,  
 And, like a beast hard-ridden, breathing  
 hard.  
 'Ungenerous, dishonourable, base,  
 Presumptuous! trusted as he was with her,  
 The sole succeder to their wealth, their  
 lands,  
 The last remaining pillar of their house,  
 The one transmitter of their ancient name,  
 Their child.' 'Our child!' 'Our heiress!'  
 'Ours!' for still,  
 Like echoes from beyond a hollow, came  
 Her sicklier iteration. Last he said,

'Boy, mark me! for your fortunes are to  
 make.  
 I swear you shall not make them out of  
 mine.  
 Now inasmuch as you have practised on  
 her,  
 Perplexed her, made her half forget herself,  
 Swerve from her duty to herself and us —  
 Things in an Aylmer deem'd impossible,  
 Far as we track ourselves — I say that  
 this —  
 Else I withdraw favour and countenance  
 From you and yours for ever — shall you  
 do.  
 Sir, when you see her — but you shall not  
 see her —  
 No, you shall write, and not to her, but  
 me:  
 And you shall say that having spoken  
 with me,  
 And after look'd into yourself, you find  
 That you meant nothing — as indeed you  
 know  
 That you meant nothing. Such a match  
 as this!  
 Impossible, prodigious!' These were  
 words,  
 As meted by his measure of himself,  
 Arguing boundless forbearance: after  
 which,  
 And Leolin's horror-stricken answer, 'I  
 So foul a traitor to myself and her,  
 Never oh never,' for about as long  
 As the wind-hover hangs in balance,  
 paused  
 Sir Aylmer reddening from the storm  
 within,  
 Then broke all bonds of courtesy, and  
 crying,  
 'Boy, should I find you by my doors  
 again,  
 My men shall lash you from them like a  
 dog;  
 Hence!' with a sudden execration drove  
 The footstool from before him, and arose;  
 So, stammering 'scoundrel' out of teeth  
 that ground  
 As in a dreadful dream, while Leolin still  
 Retreated half-aghast, the fierce old man  
 Follow'd, and under his own lintel stood  
 Storming with lifted hands, a hoary face  
 Meet for the reverence of the hearth, but  
 now,

Beneath a pale and unimpassion'd moon,  
 Vext with unworthy madness, and de-  
 form'd.

Slowly and conscious of the rageful eye  
 That watch'd him, till he heard the  
 ponderous door  
 Close, crashing with long echoes thro' the  
 land,  
 Went Leolin; then, his passions all in  
 flood  
 And masters of his motion, furiously  
 Down thro' the bright lawns to his  
 brother's ran,  
 And foam'd away his heart at Averill's  
 ear:  
 Whom Averill solaced as he might,  
 amazed:  
 The man was his, had been his father's,  
 friend:  
 He must have seen, himself had seen it  
 long;  
 He must have known, himself had known:  
 besides,  
 He never yet had set his daughter forth  
 Here in the woman-markets of the west,  
 Where our Caucasians let themselves be  
 sold.  
 Some one, he thought, had slander'd  
 Leolin to him.  
 'Brother, for I have loved you more as  
 son  
 Than brother, let me tell you: I myself —  
 What is their pretty saying? jilted, is it?  
 Jilted I was: I say it for your peace.  
 Pain'd, and, as bearing in myself the  
 shame  
 The woman should have borne, humili-  
 ated,  
 I lived for years a stunted sunless life;  
 Till after our good parents past away  
 Watching your growth, I seem'd again to  
 grow.  
 Leolin, I almost sin in envying you:  
 The very whitest lamb in all my fold  
 Loves you: I know her: the worst  
 thought she has  
 Is whiter even than her pretty hand:  
 She must prove true: for, brother, where  
 two fight  
 The strongest wins, and truth and love are  
 strength,  
 And you are happy: let her parents be.'



But Leolin cried out the more upon them —  
 Insolent, brainless, heartless! heiress, wealth,  
 Their wealth, their heiress! wealth enough was theirs  
 For twenty matches. Were he lord of this,  
 Why twenty boys and girls should marry on it,  
 And forty blest ones bless him, and himself  
 Be wealthy still, ay wealthier. He believed  
 This filthy marriage-hindering Mammon made  
 The harlot of the cities: nature crost  
 Was mother of the foul adulteries  
 That saturate soul with body. Name, too! name,  
 Their ancient name! they *might* be proud; its worth  
 Was being Edith's. Ah how pale she had look'd,  
 Darling, to-night! they must have rated her  
 Beyond all tolerance. These old pheasant-lords,  
 These partridge-breeders of a thousand years,  
 Who had mildew'd in their thousands, doing nothing  
 Since Egbert — why, the greater their disgrace!  
 Fall back upon a name! rest, rot in that! Not *keep* it noble, make it nobler? fools,  
 With such a vantage-ground for nobleness!  
 He had known a man, a quintessence of man,  
 The life of all — who madly loved — and he,  
 Thwarted by one of these old father-fools,  
 Had rioted his life out, and made an end.  
 He would not do it! her sweet face and faith  
 Held him from that: but he had powers, he knew it:  
 Back would he to his studies, make a name, Name, fortune too: the world should ring of him  
 To shame these mouldy Aylmers in their graves:

Chancellor, or what is greatest would he be —  
 'O brother, I am grieved to learn your grief —  
 Give me my fling, and let me say my say.'

At which, like one that sees his own excess,  
 And easily forgives it as his own,  
 He laugh'd; and then was mute; but presently  
 Wept like a storm: and honest Averill seeing  
 How low his brother's mood had fallen, fetch'd  
 His richest beeswing from a binn reserved  
 For banquets, praised the waning red, and told  
 The vintage — when *this* Aylmer came of age —  
 Then drank and past it; till at length the two,  
 Tho' Leolin flamed and fell again, agreed  
 That much allowance must be made for men.  
 After an angry dream this kindlier glow  
 Faded with morning, but his purpose held.

Yet once by night again the lovers met,  
 A perilous meeting under the tall pines  
 That darken'd all the northward of her Hall.  
 Him, to her meek and modest bosom prest  
 In agony, she promised that no force,  
 Persuasion, no, nor death could alter her:  
 He, passionately hopefuller, would go,  
 Labour for his own Edith, and return  
 In such a sunlight of prosperity  
 He should not be rejected. 'Write to me!  
 They loved me, and because I love their child  
 They hate me: there is war between us, dear,  
 Which breaks all bonds but ours; we must remain  
 Sacred to one another.' So they talk'd,  
 Poor children, for their comfort: the wind blew;  
 The rain of heaven, and their own bitter tears,  
 Tears, and the careless rain of heaven, mixt

Upon their faces, as they kiss'd each other  
In darkness, and above them roar'd the  
pine.

So Leolin went; and as we task our-  
selves  
To learn a language known but smatter-  
ingly  
In phrases here and there at random,  
toil'd  
Mastering the lawless science of our law,  
That codeless myriad of precedent,  
That wilderness of single instances,  
Thro' which a few, by wit or fortune led,  
May beat a pathway out to wealth and  
fame.  
The jests, that flash'd about the pleader's  
room,  
Lightning of the hour, the pun, the  
scurrilous tale,—  
Old scandals buried now seven decads  
deep  
In other scandals that have lived and  
died,  
And left the living scandal that shall  
die—  
Were dead to him already; bent as he  
was  
To make disproof of scorn, and strong in  
hopes,  
And prodigal of all brain-labour he,  
Chariot of sleep, and wine, and exercise,  
Except when for a breathing-while at eve,  
Some niggard fraction of an hour, he ran  
Beside the river-bank: and then indeed  
Harder the times were; and the hands of  
power  
Were bloodier, and the according hearts  
of men  
Seem'd harder too; but the soft river-  
breeze,  
Which fann'd the gardens of that rival  
rose  
Yet fragrant in a heart remembering  
His former talks with Edith, on him  
breathed  
Far purer in his rushings to and fro,  
After his books, to flush his blood with  
air,  
Then to his books again. My lady's  
cousin,  
Half-sickening of his pension'd afternoon,  
Drove in upon the student once or twice,

Ran a Malayan amuck against the times,  
Had golden hopes for France and all  
mankind,  
Answer'd all queries touching those at  
home  
With a heaved shoulder and a saucy  
smile,  
And fain had haled him out into the  
world,  
And air'd him there: his nearer friend  
would say,  
'Screw not the chord too sharply lest it  
snap.'  
Then left alone he pluck'd her dagger  
forth  
From where his worldless heart had kept  
it warm,  
Kissing his vows upon it like a knight.  
And wrinkled benchers often talk'd of  
him  
Approvingly, and prophesied his rise:  
For heart, I think, help'd head: her  
letters too,  
Tho' far between, and coming fitfully  
Like broken music, wr'tten as she found  
Or made occasion, being strictly watch'd,  
Charm'd him thro' every labyrinth till he  
saw  
An end, a hope, a light breaking upon  
him.

But they that cast her spirit into flesh,  
Her worldly-wise begetters, plagued them-  
selves  
To sell her, those good parents, for her  
good.  
Whatever eldest-born of rank or wealth  
Might lie within their compass, him they  
lured  
Into their net made pleasant by the baits  
Of gold and beauty, wooing him to woo.  
So month by month the noise about their  
doors,  
And distant blaze of those dull banquets,  
made  
The nightly wirer of their innocent hare  
Falter before he took it. All in vain.  
Sullen, defiant, pitying, wroth, return'd  
Leolin's rejected rivals from their suit  
So often, that the folly taking wings  
Slipt o'er those lazy limits down the wind  
With rumour, and became in other fields  
A mockery to the yeomen over ale,

And laughter to their lords: but those at home,  
 As hunters round a hunted creature draw  
 The cordon close and closer toward the death,  
 Narrow'd her goings out and comings in;  
 Forbade her first the house of Averill,  
 Then closed her access to the wealthier farms,  
 Last from her own home-circle of the poor  
 They barr'd her: yet she bore it: yet her cheek  
 Kept colour: wondrous! but, O mystery!  
 What amulet drew her down to that old oak,  
 So old, that twenty years before, a part  
 Falling had let appear the brand of John —  
 Once grovelike, each huge arm a tree,  
 but now  
 The broken base of a black tower, a cave  
 Of touchwood, with a single flourishing spray.  
 There the manorial lord too curiously  
 Raking in that millennial touchwood-dust  
 Found for himself a bitter treasure-trove;  
 Burst his own wyvern on the seal, and read  
 Writhing a letter from his child, for which  
 Came at the moment Leolin's emissary,  
 A crippled lad, and coming turn'd to fly,  
 But scared with threats of jail and halter  
 gave  
 To him that fluster'd his poor parish wits  
 The letter which he brought, and swore  
 besides  
 To play their go-between as heretofore  
 Nor let them know themselves betray'd;  
 and then,  
 Soul-stricken at their kindness to him,  
 went  
 Hating his own lean heart and miserable.

Thenceforward oft from out a despot dream  
 The father panting woke, and oft, as dawn  
 Aroused the black republic on his elms,  
 Sweeping the frothfly from the fescue  
 brush'd  
 Thro' the dim meadow toward his  
 treasure-trove,  
 Seized it, took home, and to my lady,—  
 who made

A downward crescent of her minion  
 mouth,  
 Listless in all despondence, — read; and  
 tore,  
 As if the living passion symbol'd there  
 Were living nerves to feel the rent; and  
 burnt,  
 Now chafing at his own great self defied,  
 Now striking on huge stumbling-blocks  
 of scorn  
 In babyisms, and dear diminutives  
 Scatter'd all over the vocabulary  
 Of such a love as like a chidden child,  
 After much wailing, hush'd itself at last  
 Hopeless of answer: then tho' Averill  
 wrote  
 And bade him with good heart sustain  
 himself —  
 All would be well — the lover heeded not,  
 But passionately restless came and went,  
 And rustling once at night about the place,  
 There by a keeper shot at, slightly hurt,  
 Raging return'd: nor was it well for her  
 Kept to the garden now, and grove of  
 pines,  
 Watch'd even there; and one was set to  
 watch  
 The watcher, and Sir Aylmer watch'd  
 them all,  
 Yet bitterer from his readings: once  
 indeed,  
 Warm'd with his wines, or taking pride  
 in her,  
 She look'd so sweet, he kiss'd her tenderly  
 Not knowing what possess'd him: that  
 one kiss  
 Was Leolin's one strong rival upon earth;  
 Seconded, for my lady follow'd suit,  
 Seem'd hope's returning rose: and then  
 ensued  
 A Martin's summer of his faded love,  
 Or ordeal by kindness; after this  
 He seldom crost his child without a sneer;  
 The mother flow'd in shallower acrimo-  
 nies:  
 Never one kindly smile, one kindly word:  
 So that the gentle creature shut from all  
 Her charitable use, and face to face  
 With twenty months of silence, slowly lost  
 Nor greatly cared to lose, her hold on life.  
 Last, some low fever ranging round to  
 spy  
 The weakness of a people or a house,

Like flies that haunt a wound, or deer, or  
men,  
Or almost all that is, hurting the hurt —  
Save Christ as we believe him — found  
the girl  
And flung her down upon a couch of  
fire,  
Where careless of the household faces  
near,  
And crying upon the name of Leolin,  
She, and with her the race of Aylmer,  
past.

Star to star vibrates light: may soul to  
soul  
Strike thro' a finer element of her own?  
So, — from afar, — touch as at once? or  
why  
That night, that moment, when she named  
his name,  
Did the keen shriek, 'Yes, love, yes, Edith,  
yes,'  
Shrill, till the comrade of his chambers  
woke,  
And came upon him half-arisen from sleep,  
With a weird bright eye, sweating and  
trembling,  
His hair as it were crackling into flames,  
His body half flung forward in pursuit,  
And his long arms stretch'd as to grasp a  
flyer:  
Nor knew he wherefore he had made the  
cry;

And being much befool'd and idioted  
By the rough amity of the other, sank  
As into sleep again. The second day,  
My lady's Indian kinsman rushing in,  
A breaker of the bitter news from home,  
Found a dead man, a letter edged with  
death  
Beside him, and the dagger which himself  
Gave Edith, redden'd with no bandit's  
blood:  
'From Edith' was engraven on the blade.

Then Averill went and gazed upon his  
death.  
And when he came again, his flock be-  
lieved —  
Beholding how the years which are not  
Time's  
Had blasted him — that many thousand  
days

Were clipt by horror from his term of  
life.

Yet the sad mother, for the second death  
Scarce touch'd her thro' that nearness of  
the first,

And being used to find her pastor texts,  
Sent to the harrow'd brother, praying  
him

To speak before the people of her child,  
And fixt the Sabbath. Darkly that day  
rose:

Autumn's mock sunshine of the faded  
woods

Was all the life of it; for hard on these,  
A breathless burthen of low-folded  
heavens

Stifled and chill'd at once; but every roof  
Sent out a listener: many too had known  
Edith among the hamlets round, and  
since

The parents' harshness and the hapless  
loves

And double death were widely murmur'd,  
left

Their own gray tower, or plain-faced  
tabernacle,

To hear him; all in mourning these, and  
those

With blots of it about them, ribbon, glove  
Or kerchief; while the church, — one  
night, except

For greenish glimmerings thro' the lancets,  
— made

Still paler the pale head of him, who  
tower'd

Above them, with his hopes in either  
grave.

Long o'er his bent brows linger'd  
Averill,

His face magnetic to the hand from which  
Livid he pluck'd it forth, and labour'd  
thro'

His brief prayer-prelude, gave the verse  
'Behold,

Your house is left unto you desolate!'

But lapsed into so long a pause again  
As half amazed, half frighted all his flock:  
Then from his height and loneliness of  
grief

Bore down in flood, and dash'd his angry  
heart

Against the desolations of the world.

Never since our bad earth became one  
 sea,  
 Which rolling o'er the palaces of the  
 proud,  
 And all but those who knew the living  
 God —  
 Eight that were left to make a purer  
 world —  
 When since had flood, fire, earthquake,  
 thunder, wrought  
 Such waste and havock as the idolatries,  
 Which from the low light of mortality  
 Shot up their shadows to the Heaven of  
 Heavens,  
 And worshipt their own darkness in the  
 Highest?  
 'Gash thyself, priest, and honour thy  
 brute Baäl,  
 And to thy worst self sacrifice thyself,  
 For with thy worst self hast thou clothed  
 thy God.  
 Then came a Lord in no wise like to  
 Baäl.  
 The babe shall lead the lion. Surely now  
 The wilderness shall blossom as the rose.  
 Crown thyself, worm, and worship thine  
 own lusts! —  
 No coarse and blockish God of acreage  
 Stands at thy gate for thee to grovel to —  
 Thy God is far diffused in noble groves  
 And princely halls, and farms, and flowing  
 lawns,  
 And heaps of living gold that daily grow,  
 And title-scrolls and gorgeous heraldries.  
 In such a shape dost thou behold thy  
 God.  
 Thou wilt not gash thy flesh for *him*; for  
 thine  
 Fares richly, in fine linen, not a hair  
 Ruffled upon the scarfskin, even while  
 The deathless ruler of thy dying house  
 Is wounded to the death that cannot die;  
 And tho' thou numberest with the fol-  
 lowers  
 Of One who cried, "Leave all and follow  
 me."  
 Thee therefore with His light about thy  
 feet,  
 Thee with His message ringing in thine  
 ears,  
 Thee shall thy brother man, the Lord from  
 Heaven,  
 Born of a village girl, carpenter's son,

Wonderful, Prince of peace, the Mighty  
 God,  
 Count the more base idolater of the two;  
 Crueller: as not passing thro' the fire  
 Bodies, but souls — thy children's — thro'  
 the smoke,  
 The blight of low desires — darkening  
 thine own  
 To thine own likeness; or if one of  
 these,  
 Thy better born unhappily from thee,  
 Should, as by miracle, grow straight and  
 fair —  
 Friends, I was bid to speak of such a  
 one  
 By those who most have cause to sorrow  
 for her —  
 Fairer than Rachel by the palmy well,  
 Fairer than Ruth among the fields of  
 corn,  
 Fair as the Angel that said "Hail!" she  
 seem'd,  
 Who entering fill'd the house with sudden  
 light.  
 For so mine own was brighten'd: where  
 indeed  
 The roof so lowly but that beam of  
 Heaven  
 Dawn'd sometime thro' the doorway?  
 whose the babe  
 Too ragged to be fondled on her lap,  
 Warm'd at her bosom? The poor child  
 of shame,  
 The common care whom no one cared  
 for, leapt  
 To greet her, wasting his forgotten heart,  
 As with the mother he had never known,  
 In gambols; for her fresh and innocent  
 eyes  
 Had such a star of morning in their blue,  
 That all neglected places of the field  
 Broke into nature's music when they saw  
 her.  
 Low was her voice, but won mysterious  
 way  
 Thro' the seal'd ear to which a louder  
 one  
 Was all but silence — free of alms her  
 hand —  
 The hand that robed your cottage-walls  
 with flowers  
 Has often toil'd to clothe your little  
 ones;

How often placed upon the sick man's  
brow  
Cool'd it, or laid his feverous pillow  
smooth!  
Had you one sorrow and she shared it  
not?  
One burthen and she would not lighten  
it?  
One spiritual doubt she did not soothe?  
Or when some heat of difference sparkled  
out,  
How sweetly would she glide between  
your wraths,  
And steal you from each other! for she  
walk'd  
Wearing the light yoke of that Lord of  
love,  
Who still'd the rolling wave of Galilee!  
And one — of him I was not bid to  
speak —  
Was always with her, whom you also  
knew.  
Him too you loved, for he was worthy  
love.  
And these had been together from the  
first;  
They might have been together till the  
last.  
Friends, this frail bark of ours, when  
sorely tried,  
May wreck itself without the pilot's  
guilt,  
Without the captain's knowledge: hope  
with me.  
Whose shame is that, if he went hence  
with shame?  
Nor mine the fault, if losing both of  
these  
I cry to vacant chairs and widow'd walls,  
"My house is left unto me desolate."

While thus he spoke, his hearers wept;  
but some,  
Sons of the glebe, with other frowns than  
those  
That knit themselves for summer shadow,  
scowl'd  
At their great lord. He, when it seem'd  
he saw  
No pale sheet-lightnings from afar, but  
fork'd  
Of the near storm, and aiming at his  
head,

Sat anger-charm'd from sorrow, soldier-  
like,  
Erect: but when the preacher's cadence  
flow'd  
Softening thro' all the gentle attributes  
Of his lost child, the wife, who watch'd  
his face,  
Paled at a sudden twitch of his iron  
mouth;  
And, 'O pray God that he hold up,' she  
thought,  
'Or surely I shall shame myself and him.'

'Nor yours the blame — for who beside  
your hearths  
Can take her place — if echoing me you  
cry  
"Our house is left unto us desolate"?'  
But thou, O thou that killest, hadst thou  
known,  
O thou that stonest, hadst thou under-  
stood  
The things belonging to thy peace and  
ours!  
Is there no prophet but the voice that  
calls  
Doom upon kings, or in the waste "Re-  
pent" ?  
Is not our own child on the narrow way,  
Who down to those that saunter in the  
broad  
Cries "Come up hither," as a prophet to  
us?  
Is there no stoning save with flint and  
rock?  
Yes, as the dead we weep for testify —  
No desolation but by sword and fire?  
Yes, as your moanings witness, and my-  
self  
Am lonelier, darker, earthlier for my loss.  
Give me your prayers, for he is past your  
prayers,  
Not past the living fount of pity in  
Heaven.  
But I that thought myself long-suffering,  
meek,  
Exceeding "poor in spirit" — how the  
words  
Have twisted back upon themselves, and  
mean  
Vileness, we are grown so proud — I  
wish'd my voice  
A rushing tempest of the wrath of God



To blow these sacrifices thro' the world—  
 Sent like the twelve-divided concubine  
 To inflame the tribes: but there—out  
 yonder—earth  
 Lightens from her own central Hell—  
 O there  
 The red fruit of an old idolatry—  
 The heads of chiefs and princes fall so  
 fast,  
 They cling together in the ghastly sack—  
 The land all shambles—naked marriages  
 Flash from the bridge, and ever-murder'd  
 France,  
 By shores that darken with the gathering  
 wolf,  
 Runs in a river of blood to the sick  
 sea.  
 Is this a time to madden madness then?  
 Was this a time for these to flaunt their  
 pride?  
 May Pharaoh's darkness, folds as dense  
 as those  
 Which hid the Holiest from the people's  
 eyes  
 Ere the great death, shroud this great  
 sin from all!  
 Doubtless our narrow world must canvass  
 it:  
 O rather pray for those and pity them,  
 Who, thro' their own desire accom-  
 plish'd, bring  
 Their own gray hairs with sorrow to the  
 grave—  
 Who broke the bond which they desired  
 to break,  
 Which else had link'd their race with  
 times to come—  
 Who wove coarse webs to snare her  
 purity,  
 Grossly contriving their dear daughter's  
 good—  
 Poor souls, and knew not what they did,  
 but sat  
 Ignorant, devising their own daughter's  
 death!  
 May not that earthly chastisement suffice?  
 Have not our love and reverence left  
 them bare?  
 Will not another take their heritage?  
 Will there be children's laughter in their  
 hall  
 For ever and for ever, or one stone  
 Left on another, or is it a light thing

That I, their guest, their host, their  
 ancient friend,  
 I made by these the last of all my race,  
 Must cry to these the last of theirs, as  
 cried  
 Christ ere His agony to those that swore  
 Not by the temple but the gold, and made  
 Their own traditions God, and slew the  
 Lord,  
 And left their memories a world's curse—  
 "Behold,  
 Your house is left unto you desolate"?'  
 Ended he had not, but she brook'd no  
 more:  
 Long since her heart had beat remorse-  
 lessly,  
 Her cramp't-up sorrow pain'd her, and a  
 sense  
 Of meanness in her unresisting life.  
 Then their eyes vex't her; for on entering  
 He had cast the curtains of their seat  
 aside—  
 Black velvet of the costliest—she herself  
 Had seen to that: fain had she closed  
 them now,  
 Yet dared not stir to do it, only near'd  
 Her husband inch by inch, but when she  
 laid,  
 Wifelike, her hand in one of his, he veil'd  
 His face with the other, and at once, as  
 falls  
 A creeper when the prop is broken, fell  
 The woman shrieking at his feet, and  
 swoon'd.  
 Then her own people bore along the  
 nave  
 Her pendent hands, and narrow meagre  
 face  
 Seam'd with the shallow cares of fifty  
 years:  
 And her the Lord of all the landscape  
 round  
 Ev'n to its last horizon, and of all  
 Who peer'd at him so keenly, follow'd  
 out  
 Tall and erect, but in the middle aisle  
 Reel'd, as a footsore ox in crowded  
 ways  
 Stumbling across the market to his death,  
 Unpitied; for he groped as blind, and  
 seem'd  
 Always about to fall, grasping the pews

And oaken finials till he touch'd the  
door;  
Yet to the lychgate, where his chariot  
stood,  
Strode from the porch, tall and erect  
again.

But nevermore did either pass the gate  
Save under pall with bearers. In one  
month,

Thro' weary and yet ever wearier hours,  
The childless mother went to seek her  
child;

And when he felt the silence of his  
house  
About him, and the change and not the  
change,

And those fixt eyes of painted ancestors  
Staring for ever from their gilded walls  
On him their last descendant, his own  
head

Began to droop, to fall; the man became  
Imbecile; his one word was 'desolate;'  
Dead for two years before his death was  
he;

But when the second Christmas came,  
escaped

His keepers, and the silence which he  
felt,

To find a deeper in the narrow gloom  
By wife and child; nor wanted at his  
end

The dark retinue reverencing death  
At golden thresholds; nor from tender  
hearts,

And those who sorrow'd o'er a vanish'd  
race,

Pity, the violet on the tyrant's grave.

Then the great Hall was wholly broken  
down,

And the broad woodland parcell'd into  
farms;

And where the two contrived their  
daughter's good,

Lies the hawk's cast, the mole has made  
his run,

The hedgehog underneath the plantain  
bores,

The rabbit fondles his own harmless  
face,

The slow-worm creeps, and the thin  
weasel there

Follows the mouse, and all is open field.

## SEA DREAMS.

A CITY clerk, but gently born and bred;  
His wife, an unknown artist's orphan  
child —

One babe was theirs, a Margaret, three  
years old:

They, thinking that her clear germander  
eye

Droopt in the giant-factoried city-gloom,  
Came, with a month's leave given them,  
to the sea:

For which his gains were dock'd, however  
small:

Small were his gains, and hard his work;  
besides,

Their slender household fortunes (for the  
man

Had risk'd his little) like the little thrift,  
Trembled in perilous places o'er a deep:  
And oft, when sitting all alone, his face  
Would darken, as he cursed his credulous-  
ness,

And that one unctuous mouth which lured  
him, rogue,

To buy strange shares in some Peruvian  
mine.

Now seaward-bound for health they  
gain'd a coast,

All sand and cliff and deep-inrunning  
cave,

At close of day; slept, woke, and went  
the next,

The Sabbath, pious variers from the  
church,

To chapel; where a heated pulpiteer,  
Not preaching simple Christ to simple  
men,

Announced the coming doom, and ful-  
minated

Against the scarlet woman and her creed;  
For sideways up he swung his arms, and  
shriek'd

'Thus, thus with violence,' ev'n as if he  
held

The Apocalyptic milestone, and himself  
Were that great Angel; 'Thus with  
violence

Shall Babylon be cast into the sea;  
Then comes the close.' The gentle-  
hearted wife

Sat shuddering at the ruin of a world;  
He at his own: but when the wordy storm

Had ended, forth they came and paced  
the shore,

Ran in and out the long sea-framing caves,  
Drank the large air, and saw, but scarce  
believed

(The sootflake of so many a summer still  
Clung to their fancies) that they saw, the  
sea.

So now on sand they walk'd, and now on  
cliff,

Lingering about the thymy promontories,  
Till all the sails were darken'd in the west,  
And rosed in the east: then homeward  
and to bed:

Where she, who kept a tender Christian  
hope,

Haunting a holy text, and still to that  
Returning, as the bird returns, at night,  
'Let not the sun go down upon your  
wrath,'

Said, 'Love, forgive him: ' but he did not  
speak;

And silenced by that silence lay the wife,  
Remembering her dear Lord who died  
for all.

And musing on the little lives of men,  
And how they mar this little by their feuds.

But while the two were sleeping, a full  
tide

Rose with ground-swell, which, on the  
foremost rocks

Touching, upjetted in spirits of wild sea-  
smoke,

And scaled in sheets of wasteful foam,  
and fell

In vast sea-cataracts — ever and anon  
Dead claps of thunder from within the  
cliffs

Heard thro' the living roar. At this the  
babe,

Their Margaret cradled near them, wail'd  
and woke

The mother, and the father suddenly cried,  
'A wreck, a wreck!' then turn'd, and  
groaning said,

'Forgive! How many will say, "for-  
give," and find

A sort of absolution in the sound  
To hate a little longer! No; the sin  
That neither God nor man can well for-  
give,

Hypocrisy, I saw it in him at once.

Is it so true that second thoughts are best?  
Not first, and third, which are a riper first?  
Too ripe, too late! they come too late  
for use.

Ah love, there surely lives in man and  
beast

Something divine to warn them of their  
foes:

And such a sense, when first I fronted  
him,

Said, "Trust him not;" but after, when  
I came

To know him more, I lost it, knew him  
less;

Fought with what seem'd my own un-  
charity;

Sat at his table; drank his costly wines;  
Made more and more allowance for his  
talk;

Went further, fool! and trusted him with  
all,

All my poor scrapings from a dozen years  
Of dust and deskwork: there is no such  
mine,

None; but a gulf of ruin, swallowing gold,  
Not making. Ruin'd! ruin'd! the sea  
roars

Ruin: a fearful night!

'Not fearful; fair,'

Said the good wife, 'if every star in  
heaven

Can make it fair: you do but hear the tide.  
Had you ill dreams?'

'O yes,' he said, 'I dream'd

Of such a tide swelling toward the land,  
And I from out the boundless outer deep  
Swept with it to the shore, and enter'd one  
Of those dark caves that run beneath the  
cliffs.

I thought the motion of the boundless  
deep

Bore thro' the cave, and I was heaved  
upon it

In darkness: then I saw one lovely star  
Larger and larger. "What a world," I  
thought,

"To live in!" but in moving on I found  
Only the landward exit of the cave,  
Bright with the sun upon the stream  
beyond:

And near the light a giant woman sat,  
 All over earthy, like a piece of earth,  
 A pickaxe in her hand: then out I slipt  
 Into a land all sun and blossom, trees  
 As high as heaven, and every bird that  
 sings:  
 And here the night-light flickering in my  
 eyes  
 Awoke me.'

'That was then your dream,' she said,  
 'Not sad, but sweet.'

'So sweet, I lay,' said he,  
 'And mused upon it, drifting up the  
 stream

In fancy, till I slept again, and pieced  
 The broken vision; for I dream'd that still  
 The motion of the great deep bore me on,  
 And that the woman walk'd upon the  
 brink:

I wonder'd at her strength, and ask'd her  
 of it:

"It came," she said, "by working in the  
 mines:"

O then to ask her of my shares, I thought;  
 And ask'd; but not a word; she shook  
 her head.

And then the motion of the current  
 ceased,

And there was rolling thunder; and we  
 reach'd

A mountain, like a wall of burs and  
 thorns;

But she with her strong feet up the steep  
 hill

Trod out a path: I follow'd; and at top  
 She pointed seaward: there a fleet of  
 glass,

That seem'd a fleet of jewels under me,  
 Sailing along before a gloomy cloud  
 That not one moment ceased to thunder,  
 past

In sunshine: right across its track there  
 lay,

Down in the water, a long reef of gold,  
 Or what seem'd gold: and I was glad at  
 first

To think that in our often-ransack'd world  
 Still so much gold was left; and then I  
 fear'd

Lest the gay navy there should splinter  
 on it,

And fearing waved my arm to warn them  
 off;

An idle signal, for the brittle fleet  
 (I thought I could have died to save it)  
 near'd,

Touch'd, clink'd, and clash'd, and van-  
 ish'd, and I woke,

I heard the clash so clearly. Now I see  
 My dream was Life; the woman honest  
 Work;

And my poor venture but a fleet of glass  
 Wreck'd on a reef of visionary gold.'

'Nay,' said the kindly wife to comfort  
 him,

'You raised your arm, you tumbled down  
 and broke

The glass with little Margaret's medicine  
 in it;

And, breaking that, you made and broke  
 your dream:

A trifle makes a dream, a trifle breaks.'

'No trifle,' groan'd the husband; 'yes-  
 terday

I met him suddenly in the street, and ask'd  
 That which I ask'd the woman in my  
 dream.

Like her, he shook his head. "Show me  
 the books!"

He dodged me with a long and loose  
 account.

"The books, the books!" but he, he  
 could not wait,

Bound on a matter he of life and death:  
 When the great Books (see Daniel seven  
 and ten)

Were open'd, I should find he meant me  
 well;

And then began to bloat himself, and ooze  
 All over with the fat affectionate smile  
 That makes the widow lean. "My dearest  
 friend,

Have faith, have faith! We live by faith,"  
 said he;

"And all things work together for the  
 good

Of those" — it makes me sick to quote  
 him — last

Gript my hand hard, and with God-bless-  
 you went.

I stood like one that had received a blow;  
 I found a hard friend in his loose accounts,

A loose one in the hard grip of his hand,  
 A curse in his God-bless-you: then my  
 eyes  
 Pursued him down the street, and far  
 away,  
 Among the honest shoulders of the crowd,  
 Read rascal in the motions of his back,  
 And scoundrel in the supple-sliding knee.'

'Was he so bound, poor soul?' said  
 the good wife;

'So are we all: but do not call him, love,  
 Before you prove him, rogue, and proved,  
 forgive.

His gain is loss; for he that wrongs his  
 friend  
 Wrongs himself more, and ever bears  
 about

A silent court of justice in his breast,  
 Himself the judge and jury, and himself  
 The prisoner at the bar, ever condemn'd:  
 And that drags down his life: then comes  
 what comes

Hereafter: and he meant, he said he  
 meant,

Perhaps he meant, or partly meant, you  
 well.'

"With all his conscience and one eye  
 askew" —

Love, let me quote these lines, that you  
 may learn

A man is likewise counsel for himself,  
 Too often, in that silent court of yours —

"With all his conscience and one eye  
 askew,

So false, he partly took himself for true;  
 Whose pious talk, when most his heart  
 was dry,

Made wet the crafty crowsfoot round his  
 eye;

Who, never naming God except for gain,  
 So never took that useful name in vain,  
 Made Him his catspaw and the Cross his  
 tool,

And Christ the bait to trap his dupe and  
 fool;

Nor deeds of gift, but gifts of grace he  
 forged,

And snake-like slimed his victim ere he  
 gorged;

And oft at Bible meetings, o'er the rest  
 Arising, did his holy oily best,

Dropping the too rough H in Hell and  
 Heaven,

To spread the Word by which himself  
 had thriven."

How like you this old satire?'

'Nay,' she said,

'I loathe it: he had never kindly heart,  
 Nor ever cared to better his own kind,  
 Who first wrote satire, with no pity in it.  
 But will you hear *my* dream, for I had one  
 That altogether went to music? Still  
 It awed me.'

Then she told it, having dream'd  
 Of that same coast.

— But round the North, a light,  
 A belt, it seem'd, of luminous vapour, lay,  
 And ever in it a low musical note

Swell'd up and died; and, as it swell'd,  
 a ridge

Of breaker issued from the belt, and still  
 Grew with the growing note, and when  
 the note

Had reach'd a thunderous fulness, on  
 those cliffs

Broke, mixt with awful light (the same as  
 that

Living within the belt) whereby she saw  
 That all those lines of cliffs were cliffs no  
 more,

But huge cathedral fronts of every age,  
 Grave, florid, stern, as far as eye could  
 see,

One after one: and then the great ridge  
 drew,

Lessening to the lessening music, back,  
 And past into the belt and swell'd again  
 Slowly to music: ever when it broke

The statues, king or saint, or founder fell;  
 Then from the gaps and chasms of ruin  
 left

Came men and women in dark clusters  
 round,

Some crying, 'Set them up! they shall  
 not fall!'

And others, 'Let them lie, for they have  
 fall'n.'

And still they strove and wrangled: and  
 she grieved

In her strange dream, she knew not why,  
 to find

Their wildest wailings never out of tune  
 With that sweet note; and ever as their  
 shrieks  
 Ran highest up the gamut, that great wave  
 Returning, while none mark'd it, on the  
 crowd  
 Broke, mixt with awful light, and show'd  
 their eyes  
 Glaring, and passionate looks, and swept  
 away  
 The men of flesh and blood, and men of  
 stone,  
 To the waste deeps together.

‘Then I fixt

My wistful eyes on two fair images,  
 Both crown'd with stars and high among  
 the stars, —  
 The Virgin Mother standing with her  
 child  
 High up on one of those dark minster-  
 fronts —  
 Till she began to totter, and the child  
 Clung to the mother, and sent out a cry  
 Which mixt with little Margaret's, and I  
 woke,  
 And my dream awed me: — well — but  
 what are dreams?  
 Yours came but from the breaking of a  
 glass,  
 And mine but from the crying of a  
 child.’

‘Child? No!’ said he, ‘but this tide's  
 roar, and his,  
 Our Boanerges with his threats of doom,  
 And loud-lung'd Antibabylonianisms  
 (Altho' I grant but little music there)  
 Went both to make your dream: but if  
 there were  
 A music harmonizing our wild cries,  
 Sphere-music such as that you dream'd  
 about,  
 Why, that would make our passions far  
 too like  
 The discords dear to the musician. No —  
 One shriek of hate jar all the hymns  
 of heaven:  
 True Devils with no ear, they howl in tune  
 With nothing but the Devil!’

‘“True” indeed!

One of our town, but later by an hour

Here than ourselves, spoke with me on  
 the shore;  
 While you were running down the sands,  
 and made  
 The dimpled flounce of the sea-furbelow  
 flap,  
 Good man, to please the child. She  
 brought strange news.  
 Why were you silent when I spoke to-  
 night?  
 I had set my heart on your forgiving  
 him  
 Before you knew. We *must* forgive the  
 dead.’

‘Dead! who is dead?’

‘The man your eye pursued.  
 A little after you had parted with him,  
 He suddenly dropt dead of heart-disease.’

‘Dead? he? of heart-disease? what  
 heart had he  
 To die of? dead!’

‘Ah, dearest, if there be  
 A devil in man, there is an angel too.  
 And if he did that wrong you charge him  
 with,  
 His angel broke his heart. But your  
 rough voice  
 (You spoke so loud) has roused the child  
 again.  
 Sleep, little birdie, sleep! will she not  
 sleep  
 Without her “little birdie”? well then,  
 sleep,  
 And I will sing you “birdie.”’

Saying this,  
 The woman half turn'd round from him  
 she loved,  
 Left him one hand, and reaching thro'  
 the night  
 Her other, found (for it was close be-  
 side)  
 And half-embraced the basket cradle-  
 head  
 With one soft arm, which, like the pliant  
 bough  
 That moving moves the nest and nestling,  
 sway'd  
 The cradle, while she sang this baby song:



What does little birdie say  
In her nest at peep of day?  
Let me fly, says little birdie,  
Mother, let me fly away.  
Birdie, rest a little longer,  
Till the little wings are stronger  
So she rests a little longer,  
Then she flies away.

What does little baby say,  
In her bed at peep of day?  
Baby says, like little birdie,  
Let me rise and fly away.  
Baby, sleep a little longer,  
Till the little limbs are stronger.  
If she sleeps a little longer,  
Baby too shall fly away.

‘She sleeps: let us too, let all evil,  
sleep.  
He also sleeps—another sleep than  
ours.  
He can do no more wrong: forgive him,  
dear,  
And I shall sleep the sounder!’

Then the man,  
‘His deeds yet live, the worst is yet to  
come.  
Yet let our sleep for this one night be  
sound:  
I do forgive him!’

‘Thanks, my love,’ she said,  
‘Your own will be the sweeter,’ and they  
slept.

## LUCRETIUS.

LUCILIA, wedded to Lucretius, found  
Her master cold; for when the morning  
flush  
Of passion and the first embrace had died  
Between them, tho’ he lov’d her none the  
less,  
Yet often when the woman heard his  
foot  
Return from paces in the field, and ran  
To greet him with a kiss, the master took  
Small notice, or austerely, for—his mind  
Half buried in some weightier argument,  
Or fancy-borne perhaps upon the rise  
And long roll of the Hexameter—he past

To turn and ponder those three hundred  
scrolls  
Left by the Teacher, whom he held divine.  
She brook’d it not; but wrathful, petulant,  
Dreaming some rival, sought and found  
a witch  
Who brew’d the philtre which had power,  
they said,  
To lead an errant passion home again.  
And this, at times, she mingled with his  
drink,  
And this destroy’d him; for the wicked  
broth  
Confused the chemic labour of the blood,  
And tickling the brute brain within the  
man’s  
Made havoc among those tender cells,  
and check’d  
His power to shape: he loathed himself;  
and once  
After a tempest woke upon a morn  
That mock’d him with returning calm,  
and cried:

‘Storm in the night! for thrice I heard  
the rain  
Rushing; and once the flash of a  
thunderbolt—  
Methought I never saw so fierce a fork—  
Struck out the streaming mountain-side,  
and show’d  
A riotous confluence of watercourses  
Blanching and billowing in a hollow of it,  
Where all but yester-eve was dusty-dry.

‘Storm, and what dreams, ye holy  
Gods, what dreams!  
For thrice I waken’d after dreams. Per-  
chance  
We do but recollect the dreams that come  
Just ere the waking: terrible! for it seem’d  
A void was made in Nature; all her bonds  
Crack’d; and I saw the flaring atom-  
streams  
And torrents of her myriad universe,  
Ruining along the illimitable inane,  
Fly on to clash together again, and make  
Another and another frame of things  
For ever: that was mine, my dream, I  
knew it—  
Of and belonging to me, as the dog  
With inward yelp and restless forefoot  
plies

His function of the woodland: but the  
next!

I thought that all the blood by Sylla shed  
Came driving rainlike down again on  
earth,

And where it dash'd the reddening  
meadow, sprang

No dragon warriors from Cadmean teeth,  
For these I thought my dream would  
show to me,

But girls, Hetairai, curious in their art,  
Hired animalisms, vile as those that  
made

The mulberry-faced Dictator's orgies  
worse

Than aught they fable of the quiet Gods.  
And hands they mixt, and yell'd and  
round me drove

In narrowing circles till I yell'd again  
Half-suffocated, and sprang up, and saw —  
Was it the first beam of my latest day?

'Then, then, from utter gloom stood  
out the breasts,

The breasts of Helen, and hoveringly a  
sword

Now over and now under, now direct,  
Pointed itself to pierce, but sank down  
shamed

At all that beauty; and as I stared, a  
fire,

The fire that left a roofless Ilion,  
Shot out of them, and scorch'd me that  
I woke.

'Is this thy vengeance, holy Venus,  
thine,

Because I would not one of thine own  
doves,

Not ev'n a rose, were offer'd to thee?  
thine,

Forgetful how my rich proœmion makes  
Thy glory fly along the Italian field,  
In lays that will outlast thy Deity?

'Deity? nay, thy worshippers. My  
tongue

Trips, or I speak profanely. Which of  
these

Angers thee most, or angers thee at all?  
Not if thou be'st of those who, far aloof  
From envy, hate and pity, and spite and  
scorn,

Live the great life which all our greatest  
fain

Would follow, centr'd in eternal calm.

'Nay, if thou canst, O Goddess, like  
ourselves

Touch, and be touch'd, then would I cry  
to thee

To kiss thy Mavors, roll thy tender arms  
Round him, and keep him from the lust  
of blood

That makes a steaming slaughter-house  
of Rome.

'Ay, but I meant not thee; I meant  
not her,

Whom all the pines of Ida shook to see  
Slide from that quiet heaven of hers, and  
tempt

The Trojan, while his neat-herds were  
abroad;

Nor her that o'er her wounded hunter  
wept

Her Deity false in human-amorous tears;  
Nor whom her beardless apple-arbiter

Decided fairest. Rather, O ye Gods,  
Poet-like, as the great Sicilian called

Calliope to grace his golden verse —  
Ay, and this Kypris also — did I take

That popular name of thine to shadow  
forth

The all-generating powers and genial  
heat

Of Nature, when she strikes thro' the  
thick blood

Of cattle, and light is large, and lambs  
are glad

Nosing the mother's udder, and the bird  
Makes his heart voice amid the blaze of  
flowers:

Which things appear the work of mighty  
Gods.

'The Gods! and if I go *my* work is  
left

Unfinish'd — *if* I go. The Gods, who  
haunt

The lucid interspace of world and world,  
Where never creeps a cloud, or moves a  
wind,

Nor ever falls the least white star of  
snow,

Nor ever lowest roll of thunder moans,

Nor sound of human sorrow mounts to  
mar

Their sacred everlasting calm! and such,  
Not all so fine, nor so divine a calm,  
Not such, nor all unlike it, man may gain  
Letting his own life go. The Gods, the  
Gods!

If all be atoms, how then should the  
Gods

Being atomic not be dissoluble,  
Not follow the great law? My master  
held

That Gods there are, for all men so  
believe.

I prest my footsteps into his, and meant  
Surely to lead my Memmius in a train  
Of flowery clauses onward to the proof  
That Gods there are, and deathless.  
Meant? I meant?

I have forgotten what I meant: my mind  
Stumbles, and all my faculties are lamed.

‘Look where another of our Gods, the  
Sun,

Apollo, Delius, or of older use  
All-seeing Hyperion — what you will —  
Has mounted yonder; since he never  
sware,

Except his wrath were wreak’d on  
wretched man,

That he would only shine among the  
dead

Hereafter; tales! for never yet on earth  
Could dead flesh creep, or bits of roast-  
ing ox

Moan round the spit — nor knows he  
what he sees;

King of the East altho’ he seem, and  
girt

With song and flame and fragrance,  
slowly lifts

His golden feet on those empurpled  
stairs

That climb into the windy halls of  
heaven:

And here he glances on an eye new-born,  
And gets for greeting but a wail of pain;  
And here he stays upon a freezing orb  
That fain would gaze upon him to the  
last;

And here upon a yellow eyelid fall’n  
And closed by those who mourn a friend  
in vain,

Not thankful that his troubles are no  
more.

And me, altho’ his fire is on my face  
Blinding, he sees not, nor at all can tell  
Whether I mean this day to end myself,  
Or lend an ear to Plato where he says,  
That men like soldiers may not quit the  
post

Allotted by the Gods: but he that holds  
The Gods are careless, wherefore need he  
care

Greatly for them, nor rather plunge at  
once,

Being troubled, wholly out of sight, and  
sink

Past earthquake — ay, and gout and  
stone, that break

Body toward death, and palsy, death-in-  
life,

And wretched age — and worst disease  
of all,

These prodigies of myriad nakednesses,  
And twisted shapes of lust, unspeakable,  
Abominable, strangers at my hearth

Not welcome, harpies miring every dish,  
The phantom husks of something foully  
done,

And fleeting thro’ the boundless universe,  
And blasting the long quiet of my breast  
With animal heat and dire insanity?

‘How should the mind, except it loved  
them, clasp

These idols to herself? or do they fly  
Now thinner, and now thicker, like the  
flakes

In a fall of snow, and so press in, per-  
force

Of multitude, as crowds that in an hour  
Of civic tumult jam the doors, and bear  
The keepers down, and throng, their  
rags and they

The basest, far into that council-hall  
Where sit the best and stateliest of the  
land?

‘Can I not fling this horror off me  
again,

Seeing with how great ease Nature can  
smile,

Balmier and nobler from her bath of  
storm,

At random ravage? and how easily

The mountain there has cast his cloudy  
slough,  
Now towering o'er him in serenest air,  
A mountain o'er a mountain,—ay, and  
within  
All hollow as the hopes and fears of  
men?

'But who was he, that in the garden  
snared

Picus and Faunus, rustic Gods? a tale  
To laugh at—more to laugh at in my-  
self—

For look! what is it? there? yon arbutus  
Totters; a noiseless riot underneath  
Strikes through the wood, sets all the  
tops quivering—

The mountain quickens into Nymph and  
Faun;

And here an Oread—how the sun del-  
ights

To glance and shift about her slippery  
sides,

And rosy knees and supple roundedness,  
And budded bosom-peaks—who this  
way runs

Before the rest—A satyr, a satyr, see,  
Follows; but him I proved impossible;  
Twy-natured is no nature: yet he draws  
Nearer and nearer, and I scan him now  
Beastlier than any phantom of his kind  
That ever butted his rough brother-brute  
For lust or lusty blood or provender:

I hate, abhor, spit, sicken at him; and  
she

Loathes him as well; such a precipitate  
heel,

Fledged as it were with Mercury's ankle-  
wing,

Whirls her to me: but will she fling her-  
self,

Shameless upon me? Catch her, goat-  
foot: nay,

Hide, hide them, million-myrtled wilder-  
ness,

And cavern-shadowing laurels, hide! do  
I wish—

What?—that the bush were leafless? or  
to whirl

All of them in one massacre? O ye Gods,  
I know you careless, yet, behold, to you  
From childly wont and ancient use I  
call—

I thought I lived securely as yourselves—  
No lewdness, narrowing envy, monkey-  
spite,

No madness of ambition, avarice, none:  
No larger feast than under plane or pine  
With neighbours laid along the grass, to  
take

Only such cups as left us friendly-warm,  
Affirming each his own philosophy—  
Nothing to mar the sober majesties  
Of settled, sweet, Epicurean life.

But now it seems some unseen monster  
lays

His vast and filthy hands upon my will,  
Wrenching it backward into his; and  
spoils

My bliss in being; and it was not great;  
For save when shutting reasons up in  
rhythm,

Or Heliconian honey in living words,  
To make a truth less harsh, I often grew  
Tired of so much within our little life,  
Or of so little in our little life—

Poor little life that toddles half an hour  
Crown'd with a flower or two, and there  
an end—

And since the nobler pleasure seems to  
fade,

Why should I, beastlike as I find myself,  
Not manlike end myself?—our privi-  
lege—

What beast has heart to do it? And  
what man,

What Roman would be dragg'd in tri-  
umph thus?

Not I; not he, who bears one name  
with her

Whose death-blow struck the dateless  
doom of kings,

When, brooking not the Tarquin in her  
veins,

She made her blood in sight of Collatine  
And all his peers, flushing the guiltless

air,  
Spout from the maiden fountain in her  
heart.

And from it sprang the Commonwealth,  
which breaks

As I am breaking now!

'And therefore now

Let her, that is the womb and tomb of all,  
Great Nature, take, and forcing far apart

Those blind beginnings that have made  
me man,  
Dash them anew together at her will  
Thro' all her cycles — into man once  
more,  
Or beast or bird or fish, or opulent flower:  
But till this cosmic order everywhere  
Shatter'd into one earthquake in one  
day  
Cracks all to pieces, — and that hour  
perhaps  
Is not so far when momentary man  
Shall seem no more a something to him-  
self,  
But he, his hopes and hates, his homes  
and fanes,  
And even his bones long laid within the  
grave,  
The very sides of the grave itself shall  
pass,  
Vanishing, atom and void, atom and  
void,  
Into the unseen for ever, — till that hour,  
My golden work in which I told a truth  
That stays the rolling Ixionian wheel,  
And numbs the Fury's ringlet-snake, and  
plucks  
The mortal soul from out immortal hell,

Shall stand: ay, surely: then it falls at last  
And perishes as I must; for O Thou,  
Passionless bride, divine Tranquillity,  
Year'd after by the wisest of the wise,  
Who fail to find thee, being as thou art  
Without one pleasure and without one  
pain,  
Howbeit I know thou surely must be mine  
Or soon or late, yet out of season, thus  
I woo thee roughly, for thou carest not  
How roughly men may woo thee so they  
win —  
Thus — thus: the soul flies out and dies  
in the air.'

With that he drove the knife into his  
side:  
She heard him raging, heard him fall;  
ran in,  
Beat breast, tore hair, cried out upon  
herself  
As having fail'd in duty to him, shriek'd  
That she but meant to win him back, fell  
on him,  
Clasp'd, kiss'd him, wail'd: he answer'd,  
'Care not thou!  
Thy duty? What is duty? Fare thee  
well!'

## THE PRINCESS;

### A MEDLEY.

#### PROLOGUE.

SIR Walter Vivian all a summer's day  
Gave his broad lawns until the set of  
sun  
Up to the people: thither flock'd at  
noon  
His tenants, wife and child, and thither  
half  
The neighbouring borough with their  
Institute  
Of which he was the patron. I was  
there  
From college, visiting the son, — the son  
A Walter too, — with others of our set,  
Five others: we were seven at Vivian-  
place.

And me that morning Walter show'd  
the house,  
Greek, set with busts: from vases in the  
hall  
Flowers of all heavens, and lovelier than  
their names,  
Grew side by side; and on the pavement  
lay  
Carved stones of the Abbey-ruin in the  
park,  
Huge Ammonites, and the first bones of  
Time;  
And on the tables every clime and age  
Jumbled together; celts and calumets,  
Claymore and snowshoe, toys in lava,  
fans  
Of sandal, amber, ancient rosaries,

Laborious orient ivory sphere in sphere,  
 The cursed Malayan crease, and battle-  
 clubs  
 From the isles of palm: and higher on  
 the walls,  
 Betwixt the monstrous horns of elk and  
 deer,  
 His own forefathers' arms and armour  
 hung.

And 'This,' he said, 'was Hugh's at  
 Agincourt;  
 And that was old Sir Ralph's at Ascalon:  
 A good knight he! we keep a chronicle  
 With all about him' — which he brought,  
 and I  
 Dived in a hoard of tales that dealt with  
 knights,  
 Half-legend, half-historic, counts and  
 kings  
 Who laid about them at their wills and  
 died;  
 And mixt with these, a lady, one that  
 arm'd  
 Her own fair head, and sallying thro' the  
 gate,  
 Had beat her foes with slaughter from  
 her walls.

'O miracle of women,' said the book,  
 'O noble heart who, being strait-besieged  
 By this wild king to force her to his wish,  
 Nor bent, nor broke, nor shunn'd a  
 soldier's death,  
 But now when all was lost or seem'd as  
 lost —  
 Her stature more than mortal in the burst  
 Of sunrise, her arm lifted, eyes on fire —  
 Brake with a blast of trumpets from the  
 gate,  
 And, falling on them like a thunderbolt,  
 She trampled some beneath her horses'  
 heels,  
 And some were whelm'd with missiles of  
 the wall,  
 And some were push'd with lances from  
 the rock,  
 And part were drown'd within the whirl-  
 ing brook:  
 O miracle of noble womanhood!'

So sang the gallant glorious chronicle;  
 And, I all rapt in this, 'Come out,' he said,

'To the Abbey: there is Aunt Elizabeth  
 And sister Lilia with the rest.' We went  
 (I kept the book and had my finger in it)  
 Down thro' the park: strange was the  
 sight to me;  
 For all the sloping pasture murmur'd,  
 sown  
 With happy faces and with holiday.  
 There moved the multitude, a thousand  
 heads:  
 The patient leaders of their Institute  
 Taught them with facts. One rear'd a  
 font of stone  
 And drew, from butts of water on the  
 slope,  
 The fountain of the moment, playing,  
 now  
 A twisted snake, and now a rain of pearls,  
 Or steep-up spout whereon the gilded  
 ball  
 Danced like a wisp: and somewhat lower  
 down  
 A man with knobs and wires and vials  
 fired  
 A cannon: Echo answer'd in her sleep  
 From hollow fields: and here were tele-  
 scopes  
 For azure views; and there a group of  
 girls  
 In circle waited, whom the electric shock  
 Dislink'd with shrieks and laughter:  
 round the lake  
 A little clock-work steamer paddling plied  
 And shook the lilies: perch'd about the  
 knolls  
 A dozen angry models jetted steam:  
 A petty railway ran: a fire-balloon  
 Rose gem-like up before the dusky groves  
 And dropt a fairy parachute and past:  
 And there thro' twenty posts of telegraph  
 They flash'd a saucy message to and fro  
 Between the mimic stations; so that sport  
 Went hand in hand with Science; other-  
 where  
 Pure sport: a herd of boys with clamour  
 bowl'd  
 And stump'd the wicket; babies roll'd  
 about  
 Like tumbled fruit in grass; and men  
 and maids  
 Arranged a country dance, and flew thro'  
 light  
 And shadow, while the twanging violin



Struck up with Soldier-laddie, and over-  
head

The broad ambrosial aisles of lofty lime  
Made noise with bees and breeze from  
end to end.

Strange was the sight and smacking of  
the time;

And long we gazed, but satiated at length  
Came to the ruins. High-arch'd and ivy-  
claspt,

Of finest Gothic lighter than a fire,  
Thro' one wide chasm of time and frost  
they gave

The park, the crowd, the house; but all  
within

The sword was trim as any garden lawn:  
And here we lit on Aunt Elizabeth,  
And Lilia with the rest, and lady friends  
From neighbour seats: and there was  
Ralph himself,

A broken statue propt against the wall,  
As gay as any. Lilia, wild with sport,  
Half child half woman as she was, had  
wound

A scarf of orange round the stony helm,  
And robed the shoulders in a rosy silk,  
That made the old warrior from his ivied  
nook

Glow like a sunbeam: near his tomb a feast  
Shone, silver-set; about it lay the guests,  
And there we join'd them: then the  
maiden Aunt

Took this fair day for text, and from it  
preach'd

An universal culture for the crowd,  
And all things great; but we, unworthier,  
told

Of college: he had climb'd across the  
spikes,

And he had squeezed himself betwixt  
the bars,

And he had breathed the Proctor's dogs;  
and one

Discuss'd his tutor, rough to common men,  
But honeying at the whisper of a lord;  
And one the Master, as a rogue in grain  
Vener'd with sanctimonious theory.

But while they talk'd, above their  
heads I saw

The feudal warrior lady-clad; which  
brought

My book to mind: and opening this I  
read

Of old Sir Ralph a page or two that rang  
With tilt and tourney; then the tale of  
her

That drove her foes with slaughter from  
her walls,

And much I praised her nobleness, and  
'Where,'

Ask'd Walter, patting Lilia's head (she  
lay

Beside him) 'lives there such a woman  
now?'

Quick answer'd Lilia, 'There are thou-  
sands now

Such women, but convention beats them  
down:

It is but bringing up; no more than  
that:

You men have done it: how I hate you  
all!

Ah, were I something great! I wish I  
were

Some mighty poetess, I would shame  
you then,

That love to keep us children! O I wish  
That I were some great princess, I would  
build

Far off from men a college like a man's,  
And I would teach them all that men are  
taught;

We are twice as quick!' And here she  
shook aside

The hand that play'd the patron with her  
curls.

And one said smiling, 'Pretty were the  
sight

If our old halls could change their sex,  
and flaunt

With prudes for proctors, dowagers for  
deans,

And sweet girl-graduates in their golden  
hair.

I think they should not wear our rusty  
gowns,

But move as rich as Emperor-moths, or  
Ralph

Who shines so in the corner; yet I fear,  
If there were many Lilias in the brood,  
However deep you might embower the  
nest,

Some boy would spy it.'

At this upon the sward  
She tapt her tiny silken-sandal'd foot:  
'That's your light way; but I would  
make it death  
For any male thing but to peep at us.'

Petulant she spoke, and at herself she  
laugh'd;  
A rosebud set with little wilful thorns,  
And sweet as English air could make her,  
she:

But Walter hail'd a score of names upon  
her,

And 'petty Ogress,' and 'ungrateful Puss,'  
And swore he long'd at college, only  
long'd,

All else was well, for she-society.  
They boated and they cricketed; they  
talk'd

At wine, in clubs, of art, of politics;  
They lost their weeks; they vex't the  
souls of deans;

They rode; they betted; made a hun-  
dred friends,

And caught the blossom of the flying  
terms,

But miss'd the mignonette of Vivian-place,  
The little hearth-flower Lilia. Thus he  
spoke,

Part banter, part affection.

'True,' she said,  
'We doubt not that. O yes, you miss'd  
us much.

I'll stake my ruby ring upon it you did.'

She held it out; and as a parrot turns  
Up thro' gilt wires a crafty loving eye,  
And takes a lady's finger with all care,  
And bites it for true heart and not for  
harm,

So he with Lilia's. Daintily she shriek'd  
And wrung it. 'Doubt my word again!'  
he said.

'Come, listen! here is proof that you  
were miss'd:

We seven stay'd at Christmas up to read;  
And there we took one tutor as to read:  
The hard-grain'd Muses of the cube and  
square

Were out of season: never man, I think,  
So moulder'd in a sinecure as he:

For while our cloisters echo'd frosty feet,

And our long walks were stript as bare  
as brooms,

We did but talk you over, pledge you all  
In wassail; often, like as many girls —  
Sick for the hollies and the yews of home —  
As many little trifling Liliæ — play'd  
Charades and riddles as at Christmas  
here,

And *what's my thought* and *when* and  
*where* and *how*,

And often told a tale from mouth to  
mouth

As here at Christmas.'

She remember'd that:  
A pleasant game, she thought: she liked  
it more

Than magic music, forfeits, all the rest.  
But these — what kind of tales did men  
tell men,

She wonder'd, by themselves?

A half-disdain  
Perch'd on the pouted blossom of her  
lips:

And Walter nodded at me; 'He began,  
The rest would follow, each in turn; and so  
We forged a sevenfold story. Kind?  
what kind?

Chimeras, crotchets, Christmas solecisms,  
Seven-headed monsters only made to kill  
Time by the fire in winter.'

'Kill him now,  
The tyrant! kill him in the summer too,'  
Said Lilia; 'Why not now?' the maiden  
Aunt.

'Why not a summer's as a winter's tale?  
A tale for summer as befits the time,  
And something it should be to suit the  
place,

Heroic, for a hero lies beneath,  
Grave, solemn!'

Walter warp'd his mouth at this  
To something so mock-solemn, that I  
laugh'd

And Lilia woke with sudden-shrilling  
mirth

And echo like a ghostly woodpecker,  
Hid in the ruins; till the maiden Aunt  
(A little sense of wrong had touch'd her  
face

With colour) turn'd to me with 'As you  
will;

Heroic if you will, or what you will,  
Or be yourself your hero if you will.'

'Take Lilia, then, for heroine,' clamour'd he,

'And make her some great Princess, six feet high,

Grand, epic, homicidal; and be you The Prince to win her!'

'Then follow me, the Prince,' I answer'd, 'each be hero in his turn! Seven and yet one, like shadows in a dream. —

Heroic seems our Princess as required — But something made to suit with Time and place,

A Gothic ruin and a Grecian house, A talk of college and of ladies' rights, A feudal knight in silken masquerade, And, yonder, shrieks and strange experiments

For which the good Sir Ralph had burnt them all —

This *were* a medley! we should have him back

Who told the "Winter's tale" to do it for us.

No matter: we will say whatever comes. And let the ladies sing us, if they will, From time to time, some ballad or a song To give us breathing-space.'

So I began, And the rest follow'd: and the women sang

Between the rougher voices of the men, Like linnets in the pauses of the wind: And here I give the story and the songs.

## I.

A prince I was, blue-eyed, and fair in face,

Of temper amorous, as the first of May, With lengths of yellow ringlet, like a girl, For on my cradle shone the Northern star.

There lived an ancient legend in our house.

Some sorcerer, whom a far-off grandsire burnt

Because he cast no shadow, had foretold, Dying, that none of all our blood should know

The shadow from the substance, and that one

Should come to fight with shadows and to fall.

For so, my mother said, the story ran. And, truly, waking dreams were, more or less,

An old and strange affection of the house. Myself too had weird seizures, Heaven knows what:

On a sudden in the midst of men and day, And while I walk'd and talk'd as heretofore,

I seem'd to move among a world of ghosts,

And feel myself the shadow of a dream. Our great court-Galen poised his gilt-head cane,

And paw'd his beard, and mutter'd 'catalepsy.'

My mother pitying made a thousand prayers;

My mother was as mild as any saint, Half-canonised by all that look'd on her, So gracious was her tact and tenderness: But my good father thought a king a king;

He cared not for the affection of the house;

He held his sceptre like a pedant's wand To lash offence, and with long arms and hands

Reach'd out, and pick'd offenders from the mass

For judgment.

Now it chanced that I had been, While life was yet in bud and blade, betroth'd

To one, a neighbouring Princess: she to me

Was proxy-wedded with a bootless calf At eight years old; and still from time to time

Came murmurs of her beauty from the South,

And of her brethren, youths of puissance; And still I wore her picture by my heart, And one dark tress; and all around them both

Sweet thoughts would swarm as bees about their queen.

But when the days drew nigh that I should wed,

My father sent ambassadors with furs

And jewels, gifts, to fetch her: these  
brought back  
A present, a great labour of the loom;  
And therewithal an answer vague as  
wind:  
Besides, they saw the king; he took the  
gifts;  
He said there was a compact; that was  
true:  
But then she had a will; was he to blame?  
And maiden fancies; loved to live alone  
Among her women; certain, would not  
wed.

That morning in the presence room I  
stood  
With Cyril and with Florian, my two  
friends:  
The first, a gentleman of broken means  
(His father's fault) but given to starts  
and bursts  
Of revel; and the last, my other heart,  
And almost my half-self, for still we  
moved  
Together, twinn'd as horse's ear and eye.

Now, while they spake, I saw my  
father's face  
Grow long and troubled like a rising  
moon,  
Inflamed with wrath: he started on his  
feet,  
Tore the king's letter, snow'd it down,  
and rent  
The wonder of the loom thro' warp and  
woof  
From skirt to skirt; and at the last he  
sware  
That he would send a hundred thousand  
men,  
And bring her in a whirlwind: then he  
chew'd  
The thrice-turn'd cud of wrath, and  
cook'd his spleen,  
Communing with his captains of the war.

At last I spoke. 'My father, let me go.  
It cannot be but some gross error lies  
In this report, this answer of a king,  
Whom all men rate as kind and hospitable:  
Or, maybe, I myself, my bride once seen,  
Whate'er my grief to find her less than  
fame,

May rue the bargain made.' And Florian  
said:

'I have a sister at the foreign court,  
Who moves about the Princess; she, you  
know,  
Who wedded with a nobleman from  
thence:  
He, dying lately, left her, as I hear,  
The lady of three castles in that land:  
Thro' her this matter might be sifted  
clean.'

And Cyril whisper'd: 'Take me with you  
too.'

Then laughing 'what, if these weird  
seizures come

Upon you in those lands, and no one near  
To point you out the shadow from the  
truth!

Take me: I'll serve you better in a  
strait;

I grate on rusty hinges here: 'but 'No!'  
Roar'd the rough king, 'you shall not;  
we ourself

Will crush her pretty maiden fancies dead  
In iron gauntlets: break the council up.'

But when the council broke, I rose and  
past

Thro' the wild woods that hung about the  
town;

Found a still place, and pluck'd her like-  
ness out;

Laid it on flowers, and watch'd it lying  
bathed

In the green gleam of dewy-tassell'd trees:  
What were those fancies? wherefore  
break her troth?

Proud look'd the lips: but while I medi-  
tated

A wind arose and rush'd upon the South,  
And shook the songs, the whispers, and  
the shrieks

Of the wild woods together; and a Voice  
Went with it, 'Follow, follow, thou shalt  
win.'

Then, ere the silver sickle of that month  
Became her golden shield, I stole from  
court

With Cyril and with Florian, unperceived,  
Cat-footed thro' the town and half in  
dread

To hear my father's clamour at our backs

With Ho! from some bay-window shake  
the night;  
But all was quiet: from the bastion'd  
walls  
Like threaded spiders, one by one, we  
dropt,  
And flying reach'd the frontier: then we  
crost  
To a livelier land; and so by tilth and  
grange,  
And vines, and blowing bosks of wilder-  
ness,  
We gain'd the mother-city thick with  
towers,  
And in the imperial palace found the  
king.

His name was Gama; crack'd and  
small his voice,  
But bland the smile that like a wrinkling  
wind  
On glassy water drove his cheek in lines;  
A little dry old man, without a star,  
Not like a king: three days he feasted  
us,  
And on the fourth I spake of why we  
came,  
And my betroth'd. 'You do us, Prince,'  
he said,  
Airing a snowy hand and signet gem,  
'All honour. We remember love our-  
selves  
In our sweet youth: there did a compact  
pass  
Long summers back, a kind of cere-  
mony—  
I think the year in which our olives  
fail'd.  
I would you had her, Prince, with all my  
heart,  
With my full heart: but there were  
widows here,  
Two widows, Lady Psyche, Lady Blanche;  
They fed her theories, in and out of place  
Maintaining that with equal husbandry  
The woman were an equal to the man.  
They harp'd on this; with this our ban-  
quets rang;  
Our dances broke and buzz'd in knots of  
talk;  
Nothing but this; my very ears were hot  
To hear them: knowledge, so my daughter  
held,

Was all in all: they had but been, she  
thought,  
As children; they must lose the child,  
assume  
The woman: then, Sir, awful odes she  
wrote,  
Too awful, sure, for what they treated of,  
But all she is and does is awful; odes  
About this losing of the child; and rhymes  
And dismal lyrics, prophesying change  
Beyond all reason: these the women  
sang;  
And they that know such things—I  
sought but peace;  
No critic I—would call them master-  
pieces:  
They master'd *me*. At last she begg'd a  
boon,  
A certain summer-palace which I have  
Hard by your father's frontier: I said no,  
Yet being an easy man, gave it: and  
there,  
All wild to found an University  
For maidens, on the spur she fled; and  
more  
We know not,—only this: they see no  
men,  
Not ev'n her brother Arac, nor the twins  
Her brethren, tho' they love her, look  
upon her  
As on a kind of paragon; and I  
(Pardon me saying it) were much loth to  
breed  
Dispute betwixt myself and mine: but  
since  
(And I confess with right) you think me  
bound  
In some sort, I can give you letters to her;  
And yet, to speak the truth, I rate your  
chance  
Almost at naked nothing.'

Thus the king;  
And I, tho' nettled that he seem'd to slur  
With garrulous ease and oily courtesies  
Our formal compact, yet, not less (all frets  
But chafing me on fire to find my bride)  
Went forth again with both my friends.  
We rode  
Many a long league back to the North.  
At last  
From hills, that look'd across a land of  
hope,  
We dropt with evening on a rustic town

Set in a gleaming river's crescent-curve,  
Close at the boundary of the liberties;  
There, enter'd an old hostel, call'd mine  
    host  
To council, plied him with his richest  
    wines,  
And show'd the late-writ letters of the  
    king.

He with a long low sibilation, stared  
As blank as death in marble; then ex-  
    claim'd

Averring it was clear against all rules  
For any man to go: but as his brain  
Began to mellow, 'If the king,' he said,  
'Had given us letters, was he bound to  
    speak?

The king would bear him out; 'and at  
    the last—

The summer of the vine in all his veins—  
'No doubt that we might make it worth  
    his while.

She once had past that way; he heard  
    her speak;

She scared him; life! he never saw the  
    like;

She look'd as grand as doomsday and as  
    grave:

And he, he revered his liege-lady  
    there;

He always made a point to post with  
    mares;

His daughter and his housemaid were the  
    boys:

The land, he understood, for miles about  
Was till'd by women; all the swine were  
    sows,

And all the dogs'—

    But while he jested thus,  
A thought flash'd thro' me which I clothed  
    in act,

Remembering how we three presented  
    Maid

Or Nymph, or Goddess, at high tide of  
    feast,

In masque or pageant at my father's court.  
We sent mine host to purchase female  
    gear;

He brought it, and himself, a sight to  
    shake

The midriff of despair with laughter, help  
To lace us up, till, each, in maiden  
    plumes

We rustled: him we gave a costly bribe  
To guerdon silence, mounted our good  
    steeds,  
And boldly ventured on the liberties.

We follow'd up the river as we rode,  
And rode till midnight when the college  
    lights

Began to glitter firefly-like in copse  
And linden alley: then we past an arch,  
Whereon a woman-statue rose with wings  
From four wing'd horses dark against the  
    stars;

And some inscription ran along the front,  
But deep in shadow: further on we  
    gain'd

A little street half garden and half house;  
But scarce could hear each other speak  
    for noise

Of clocks and chimes, like silver hammers  
    falling

On silver anvils, and the splash and stir  
Of fountains spouted up and showering  
    down

In meshes of the jasmine and the rose:  
And all about us peal'd the nightingale,  
Rapt in her song, and careless of the  
    snare.

There stood a bust of Pallas for a sign,  
By two sphere lamps blazon'd like Heaven  
    and Earth

With constellation and with continent,  
Above an entry: riding in, we call'd;  
A plump-arm'd Ostleress and a stable  
    wench

Came running at the call, and help'd us  
    down.

Then stept a buxom hostess forth, and  
    sail'd,

Full-blown, before us into rooms which  
    gave

Upon a pillar'd porch, the bases lost  
In laurel: her we ask'd of that and this,  
And who were tutors. 'Lady Blanche,'  
    she said,

'And Lady Psyche.' 'Which was pret-  
    tiest,  
Best-natured?' 'Lady Psyche.' 'Hers  
    are we,'

One voice, we cried; and I sat down and  
    wrote,

In such a hand as when a field of corn



Bows all its ears before the roaring East;  
 'Three ladies of the Northern empire  
 pray  
 Your Highness would enroll them with  
 your own,  
 As Lady Psyche's pupils.'

This I seal'd:  
 The seal was Cupid bent above a scroll,  
 And o'er his head Uranian Venus hung,  
 And raised the blinding bandage from his  
 eyes:  
 I gave the letter to be sent with dawn;  
 And then to bed, where half in doze I  
 seem'd  
 To float about a glimmering night, and  
 watch  
 A full sea glazed with muffled moonlight,  
 swell  
 On some dark shore just seen that it was  
 rich.

## II.

As thro' the land at eve we went,  
 And pluck'd the ripen'd ears,  
 We fell out, my wife and I,  
 O we fell out I know not why,  
 And kiss'd again with tears,  
 And blessings on the falling out  
 That all the more endears,  
 When we fall out with those we love  
 And kiss again with tears!  
 For when we came where lies the child  
 We lost in other years,  
 There above the little grave,  
 O there above the little grave,  
 We kiss'd again with tears.

At break of day the College Portress  
 came:  
 She brought us Academic silks, in hue  
 The lilac, with a silken hood to each,  
 And zoned with gold; and now when  
 these were on,  
 And we as rich as moths from dusk  
 cocoons,  
 She, curtsying her obeisance, let us know  
 The Princess Ida waited: out we paced,  
 I first, and following thro' the porch that  
 sang  
 All round with laurel, issued in a court  
 Compact of lucid marbles, boss'd with  
 lengths  
 Of classic frieze, with ample awnings gay

· Betwixt the pillars, and with great urns  
 of flowers.  
 The Muses and the Graces, group'd in  
 threes,  
 Enring'd a billowing fountain in the  
 midst;  
 And here and there on lattice edges lay  
 Or book or lute; but hastily we past,  
 And up a flight of stairs into the hall.

There at a board by tome and paper  
 sat,  
 With two tame leopards couch'd beside  
 her throne,  
 All beauty compass'd in a female form,  
 The Princess; liker to the inhabitant  
 Of some clear planet close upon the Sun,  
 Than our man's earth; such eyes were in  
 her head,  
 And so much grace and power, breathing  
 down  
 From over her arch'd brows, with every  
 turn  
 Lived thro' her to the tips of her long  
 hands,  
 And to her feet. She rose her height,  
 and said:

'We give you welcome: not without  
 redound  
 Of use and glory to yourselves ye come,  
 The first-fruits of the stranger: aftertime,  
 And that full voice which circles round  
 the grave,  
 Will rank you nobly, mingled up with me.  
 What! are the ladies of your land so  
 tall?'

'We of the court,' said Cyril. 'From  
 the court,'  
 She answer'd, 'then ye know the Prince?'  
 and he:  
 'The climax of his age! as tho' there were  
 One rose in all the world, your Highness  
 that,  
 He worships your ideal: ' she replied:  
 'We scarcely thought in our own hall to  
 hear  
 This barren verbiage, current among men,  
 Light coin, the tinsel clink of compliment.  
 Your flight from out your bookless wilds  
 would seem  
 As arguing love of knowledge and of  
 power;

Your language proves you still the child.

Indeed,

We dream not of him: when we set our hand

To this great work, we purposed with ourself

Never to wed. You likewise will do well,  
Ladies, in entering here, to cast and fling

The tricks, which make us toys of men,  
that so,

Some future time, if so indeed you will,  
You may with those self-styled our lords ally

Your fortunes, justlier balanced, scale with scale.'

At those high words, we conscious of ourselves,

Perused the matting; then an officer  
Rose up, and read the statutes, such as these:

Not for three years to correspond with home;

Not for three years to cross the liberties;  
Not for three years to speak with any men;

And many more, which hastily subscribed,  
We enter'd on the boards: and 'Now,'  
she cried,

'Ye are green wood, see ye warp not.  
Look, our hall!

Our statues!—not of those that men desire,

Sleek Odaliskes, or oracles of mode,  
Nor stunted squaws of West or East; but she

That taught the Sabine how to rule, and she

The foundress of the Babylonian wall,  
The Carian Artemisia strong in war,  
The Rhodope, that built the pyramid,  
Clelia, Cornelia, with the Palmyrene  
That fought Aurelian, and the Roman brows

Of Agrippina. Dwell with these, and lose

Convention, since to look on noble forms  
Makes noble thro' the sensuous organism  
That which is higher. O lift your natures up:

Embrace our aims: work out your freedom. Girls,

Knowledge is now no more a fountain seal'd:

Drink deep, until the habits of the slave,  
The sins of emptiness, gossip and spite  
And slander, die. Better not be at all  
Than not be noble. Leave us: you may go:

To-day the Lady Psyche will harangue  
The fresh arrivals of the week before;  
For they press in from all the provinces,  
And fill the hive.'

She spoke, and bowing waved  
Dismissal: back again we crost the court  
To Lady Psyche's: as we enter'd in,  
There sat along the forms, like morning doves

That sun their milky bosoms on the thatch,

A patient range of pupils; she herself  
Erect behind a desk of satin-wood,  
A quick brunette, well-moulded, falcon eyed,

And on the hither side, or so she look'd,  
Of twenty summers. At her left, a child,  
In shining draperies, headed like a star,  
Her maiden babe, a double April old,  
Aglaiã slept. We sat: the Lady glanced:  
Then Florian, but no livelier than the dame

That whisper'd 'Asses' ears' among the sedge,

'My sister.' 'Comely, too, by all that's fair,'

Said Cyril. 'O hush, hush!' and she began.

'This world was once a fluid haze of light,

Till toward the centre set the starry tides,  
And eddied into suns, that wheeling cast  
The planets: then the monster, then the man;

Tattoo'd or woaded, winter-clad in skins,  
Raw from the prime, and crushing down his mate;

As yet we find in barbarous isles, and here

Among the lowest.'

Thereupon she took  
A bird's-eye-view of all the ungracious past;

Glanced at the legendary Amazon  
As emblematic of a nobler age;

Appraised the Lycian custom, spoke of those  
 That lay at wine with Lar and Lucumo;  
 Ran down the Persian, Grecian, Roman  
 lines  
 Of empire, and the woman's state in each,  
 How far from just; till warming with her  
 theme  
 She fulminated out her scorn of laws Salique  
 And little-footed China, touch'd on Ma-  
 homet  
 With much contempt, and came to  
 chivalry:  
 When some respect, however slight, was  
 paid  
 To woman, superstition all awry:  
 However then commenced the dawn: a  
 beam  
 Had slanted forward, falling in a land  
 Of promise; fruit would follow. Deep,  
 indeed,  
 Their debt of thanks to her who first had  
 dared  
 To leap the rotten pales of prejudice,  
 Disyoke their necks from custom, and  
 assert  
 None lordlier than themselves but that  
 which made  
 Woman and man. She had founded;  
 they must build.  
 Here might they learn whatever men were  
 taught:  
 Let them not fear: some said their heads  
 were less:  
 Some men's were small; not they the  
 least of men;  
 For often fineness compensated size:  
 Besides the brain was like the hand, and  
 grew  
 With using; thence the man's, if more  
 was more;  
 He took advantage of his strength to be  
 First in the field: some ages had been  
 lost;  
 But woman ripen'd earlier, and her life  
 Was longer; and albeit their glorious  
 names  
 Were fewer, scatter'd stars, yet since in  
 truth  
 The highest is the measure of the man,  
 And not the Kaffir, Hottentot, Malay,  
 Nor those horn-handed breakers of the  
 glebe,

But Homer, Plato, Verulam; even so  
 With woman: and in arts of government  
 Elizabeth and others; arts of war  
 The peasant Joan and others; arts of  
 grace  
 Sappho and others vied with any man:  
 And, last not least, she who had left her  
 place,  
 And bow'd her state to them, that they  
 might grow  
 To use and power on this Oasis, lapt  
 In the arms of leisure, sacred from the  
 blight  
 Of ancient influence and scorn.

At last

She rose upon a wind of prophecy  
 Dilating on the future; 'everywhere  
 Two heads in council, two beside the  
 hearth,  
 Two in the tangled business of the world,  
 Two in the liberal offices of life,  
 Two plummets dropt for one to sound  
 the abyss  
 Of science, and the secrets of the mind:  
 Musician, painter, sculptor, critic, more:  
 And everywhere the broad and bounteous  
 Earth  
 Should bear a double growth of those  
 rare souls,  
 Poets, whose thoughts enrich the blood  
 of the world.'

She ended here, and beckon'd us: the  
 rest  
 Parted; and, glowing full-faced welcome,  
 she  
 Began to address us, and was moving on  
 In gratulation, till as when a boat  
 Tacks, and the slacken'd sail flaps, all  
 her voice  
 Faltering and fluttering in her throat, she  
 cried  
 'My brother!' 'Well, my sister.' 'O,'  
 she said,  
 'What do you here? and in this dress?  
 and these?  
 Why who are these? a wolf within the  
 fold!  
 A pack of wolves! the Lord be gracious  
 to me!  
 A plot, a plot, a plot, to ruin all!'  
 'No plot, no plot,' he answer'd.  
 'Wretched boy,

How saw you not the inscription on the  
gate,

LET NO MAN ENTER IN ON PAIN OF  
DEATH?'

'And if I had,' he answer'd, 'who could  
think

The softer Adams of your Academe,  
O sister, Sirens tho' they be, were such  
As chanted on the blanching bones of  
men?'

'But you will find it otherwise,' she said.  
'You jest: ill jesting with edge-tools!  
my vow

Binds me to speak, and O that iron will,  
That axlike edge unturnable, our Head,  
The Princess.' 'Well then, Psyche, take  
my life,

And nail me like a weasel on a grange  
For warning: bury me beside the gate,  
And cut this epitaph above my bones;  
*Here lies a brother by a sister slain,*

*All for the common good of womankind.'*  
'Let me die too,' said Cyril, 'having  
seen

And heard the Lady Psyche.'

I struck in:

'Albeit so mask'd, Madam, I love the  
truth;

Receive it; and in me behold the Prince  
Your countryman, affianced years ago  
To the Lady Ida: here, for here she was,  
And thus (what other way was left) I  
came.'

'O Sir, O Prince, I have no country;  
none;

If any, this; but none. Whate'er I was  
Disrooted, what I am is grafted here.  
Affianced, Sir? love-whispers may not  
breathe

Within this vestal limit, and how should  
I,

Who am not mine, say, live: the thunder-  
bolt

Hangs silent; but prepare: I speak; it  
falls.'

'Yet pause,' I said: 'for that inscription  
there,

I think no more of deadly lurks therein,  
Than in a clapper clapping in a garth,  
To scare the fowl from fruit: if more  
there be,

If more and acted on, what follows?  
war;

Your own work marr'd: for this your  
Academe,

Whichever side be Victor, in the halloo  
Will topple to the trumpet down, and  
pass

With all fair theories only made to gild  
A stormless summer.' 'Let the Princess  
judge

Of that,' she said: 'farewell, Sir — and  
to you.

I shudder at the sequel, but I go.'

'Are you that Lady Psyche,' I rejoin'd,  
'The fifth in line from that old Florian,  
Yet hangs his portrait in my father's hall'  
(The gaunt old Baron with his beetle brow  
Sun-shaded in the heat of dusty fights)

As he bestrode my Grandsire, when he  
fell,

And all else fled? we point to it, and we  
say,

The loyal warmth of Florian is not cold,  
But branches current yet in kindred  
veins.'

'Are you that Psyche,' Florian added;  
'she

With whom I sang about the morning  
hills,

Flung ball, flew kite, and raced the  
purple fly,

And snared the squirrel of the glen? are  
you

That Psyche, wont to bind my throbbing  
brow,

To smoothe my pillow, mix the foaming  
draught

Of fever, tell me pleasant tales, and read  
My sickness down to happy dreams? are  
you

That brother-sister Psyche, both in one?  
You were that Psyche, but what are you  
now?'

'You are that Psyche,' Cyril said, 'for  
whom

I would be that for ever which I seem,  
Woman, if I might sit beside your feet,  
And glean your scatter'd sapience.'

Then once more,

'Are you that Lady Psyche,' I began,  
'That on her bridal morn before she  
past

From all her old companions, when the  
king

Kiss'd her pale cheek, declared that  
 ancient ties  
 Would still be dear beyond the southern  
 hills;  
 That were there any of our people there  
 In want or peril, there was one to hear  
 And help them? look! for such are  
 these and I,  
 'Are you that Psyche,' Florian ask'd,  
 'to whom,  
 In gentler days, your arrow-wounded  
 fawn  
 Came flying while you sat beside the  
 well?  
 The creature laid his muzzle on your lap,  
 And sobb'd, and you sobb'd with it, and  
 the blood  
 Was sprinkled on your kirtle, and you  
 wept.  
 That was fawn's blood, not brother's,  
 yet you wept.  
 O by the bright head of my little niece,  
 You were that Psyche, and what are  
 you now?'  
 'You are that Psyche,' Cyril said again,  
 'The mother of the sweetest little maid,  
 That ever crow'd for kisses.'  
 'Out upon it!'  
 She answer'd, 'peace! and why should  
 I not play  
 The Spartan Mother with emotion, be  
 The Lucius Junius Brutus of my kind?  
 Him you call great: he for the common  
 weal,  
 The fading politics of mortal Rome,  
 As I might slay this child, if good need  
 were,  
 Slew both his sons: and I, shall I, on  
 whom  
 The secular emancipation turns  
 Of half this world, be swerved from right  
 to save  
 A prince, a brother? a little will I yield.  
 Best so, perchance, for us, and well for  
 you.  
 O hard, when love and duty clash! I  
 fear  
 My conscience will not count me fleck-  
 less; yet—  
 Hear my conditions: promise (otherwise  
 You perish) as you came, to slip away,  
 To-day, to-morrow, soon: it shall be  
 said,

These women were too barbarous, would  
 not learn;  
 They fled, who might have shamed us:  
 promise, all.'

What could we else, we promised  
 each; and she,  
 Like some wild creature newly-caged,  
 commenced

A to-and-fro, so pacing till she paused  
 By Florian; holding out her lily arms  
 Took both his hands, and smiling faintly  
 said:

'I knew you at the first: tho' you have  
 grown

You scarce have alter'd: I am sad and  
 glad

To see you, Florian. I give thee to  
 death

My brother! it was duty spoke, not I.  
 My needful seeming harshness, pardon it.  
 Our mother, is she well?'

With that she kiss'd  
 His forehead, then, a moment after,  
 clung

About him, and betwixt them blossom'd  
 up

From out a common vein of memory  
 Sweet household talk, and phrases of  
 the hearth,

And far allusion, till the gracious dews  
 Began to glisten and to fall: and while  
 They stood, so rapt, we gazing, came a  
 voice,

'I brought a message here from Lady  
 Blanche.'

Back started she, and turning round we  
 saw

The Lady Blanche's daughter where she  
 stood,

Melissa, with her hand upon the lock,  
 A rosy blonde, and in a college gown,  
 That clad her like an April daffodilly  
 (Her mother's colour) with her lips  
 apart,

And all her thoughts as fair within her  
 eyes,

As bottom agates seen to wave and float  
 In crystal currents of clear morning seas.

So stood that same fair creature at the  
 door.

Then Lady Psyche, 'Ah — Melissa — you!

You heard us?' and Melissa, 'O pardon me

I heard, I could not help it, did not wish:

But, dearest Lady, pray you fear me not,  
Nor think I bear that heart within my breast,

To give three gallant gentlemen to death.'  
'I trust you,' said the other, 'for we two  
Were always friends, none closer, elm  
and vine:

But yet your mother's jealous tempera-  
ment—

Let not your prudence, dearest, drowse,  
or prove

The Danaid of a leaky vase, for fear  
This whole foundation ruin, and I lose  
My honour, these their lives.' 'Ah, fear  
me not,'

Replied Melissa; 'no—I would not tell,  
No, not for all Aspasia's cleverness,  
No, not to answer, Madam, all those  
hard things

That Sheba came to ask of Solomon.'  
'Be it so,' the other, 'that we still may  
lead

The new light up, and culminate in peace,  
For Solomon may come to Sheba yet.'

Said Cyril, 'Madam, he the wisest man  
Feasted the woman wisest then, in halls  
Of Lebanonian cedar: nor should you  
(Tho', Madam, *you* should answer, *we*  
would ask)

Less welcome find among us, if you came  
Among us, debtors for our lives to you,  
Myself for something more.' He said  
not what,

But 'Thanks,' she answer'd, 'Go: we  
have been too long

Together: keep your hoods about the  
face;

They do so that affect abstraction here.  
Speak little; mix not with the rest; and  
hold

Your promise: all, I trust, may yet be  
well.'

We turn'd to go, but Cyril took the  
child,

And held her round the knees against  
his waist,

And blew the swell'n cheek of a trump-  
eter,

While Psyche watch'd them, smiling  
and the child

Push'd her flat hand against his face  
and laugh'd;

And thus our conference closed.

And then we stroll'd

For half the day thro' stately theatres  
Bench'd crescent-wise. In each we sat,  
we heard

The grave Professor. On the lecture  
slate

The circle rounded under female hands  
With flawless demonstration: follow'd  
then

A classic lecture, rich in sentiment,  
With scraps of thundrous Epic lilted out  
By violet-hooded Doctors, elegies  
And quoted odes, and jewels five-words  
long

That on the stretch'd forefinger of all  
Time

Sparkle for ever: then we dipt in all  
That treats of whatsoever is, the state,  
The total chronicles of man, the mind,  
The morals, something of the frame, the  
rock,

The star, the bird, the fish, the shell, the  
flower,

Electric, chemic laws, and all the rest,  
And whatsoever can be taught and  
known;

Till like three horses that have broken  
fence,

And glutt'd all night long breast-deep  
in corn,

We issued gorged with knowledge, and  
I spoke:

'Why, Sirs, they do all this as well as  
we.'

'They hunt old trails,' said Cyril, 'very  
well;

But when did woman ever yet invent?'  
'Ungracious!' answered Florian; 'have  
you learnt

No more from Psyche's lecture, you that  
talk'd

The trash that made me sick, and almost  
sad?'

'O trash,' he said, 'but with a kernel in it.  
Should I not call her wise, who made me  
wise?

And learnt? I learnt more from her in a  
flash,



Than if my brainpan were an empty hull,  
And every Muse tumbled a science in.  
A thousand hearts lie fallow in these halls,  
And round these halls a thousand baby

loves  
Fly twanging headless arrows at the  
hearts,

Whence follows many a vacant pang;  
but O

With me, Sir, enter'd in the bigger boy,  
The Head of all the golden-shafted firm,  
The long-limb'd lad that had a Psyche  
too;

He cleft me thro' the stomacher; and  
now

What think you of it, Florian? do I chase  
The substance or the shadow? will it  
hold?

I have no sorcerer's malison on me,  
No ghostly hauntings like his Highness. I  
Flatter myself that always everywhere  
I know the substance when I see it.

Well,  
Are castles shadows? Three of them?  
Is she

The sweet proprietress a shadow? If not,  
Shall those three castles patch my tat-  
ter'd coat?

For dear are those three castles to my  
wants,

And dear is sister Psyche to my heart,  
And two dear things are one of double  
worth,

And much I might have said, but that  
my zone

Unmann'd me: then the Doctors! O to  
hear

The Doctors! O to watch the thirsty  
plants

Imbibing! once or twice I thought to roar,  
To break my chain, to shake my mane:  
but thou,

Modulate me, Soul of mincing mimicry!  
Make liquid treble of that bassoon, my  
throat;

Abase those eyes that ever loved to meet  
Star-sisters answering under crescent  
brows;

Abate the stride, which speaks of man,  
and loose

A flying charm of blushes o'er this cheek,  
Where they like swallows coming out of  
time

Will wonder why they came: but hark  
the bell

For dinner, let us go!

And in we stream'd  
Among the columns, pacing staid and still  
By twos and threes, till all from end to end  
With beauties every shade of brown and  
fair

In colours gayer than the morning mist,  
The long hall glitter'd like a bed of  
flowers.

How might a man not wander from his  
wits

Pierced thro' with eyes, but that I kept  
mine own

Intent on her, who rapt in glorious dreams,  
The second-sight of some Astræan age,  
Sat compass'd with professors: they, the  
while,

Discuss'd a doubt and tost it to and fro:  
A clamour thicken'd, mixt with inmost  
terms

Of art and science: Lady Blanche alone  
Of faded form and haughtiest lineaments,  
With all her autumn tresses falsely brown,  
Shot sidelong daggers at us, a tiger-cat  
In act to spring.

At last a solemn grace  
Concluded, and we sought the gardens:  
there

One walk'd reciting by herself, and one  
In this hand held a volume as to read,  
And smoothed a petted peacock down  
with that:

Some to a low song oar'd a shallop by,  
Or under arches of the marble bridge  
Hung, shadow'd from the heat: some  
hid and sought

In the orange thickets: others tost a ball  
Above the fountain-jets, and back again  
With laughter: others lay about the  
lawns,

Of the older sort, and murmur'd that their  
May

Was passing: what was learning unto  
them?

They wish'd to marry; they could rule a  
house;

Men hated learned women: but we three  
Sat muffled like the Fates; and often  
came

Melissa hitting all we saw with shafts  
Of gentle satire, kin to charity,

That harm'd not: then day droopt; the  
 chapel bells  
 Call'd us: we left the walks; we mixt  
 with those  
 Six hundred maidens clad in purest white,  
 Before two streams of light from wall to  
 wall,  
 While the great organ almost burst his  
 pipes,  
 Groaning for power, and rolling thro' the  
 court  
 A long melodious thunder to the sound  
 Of solemn psalms, and silver litanies,  
 The work of Ida, to call down from  
 Heaven  
 A blessing on her labours for the world.

## III.

Sweet and low, sweet and low,  
 Wind of the western sea,  
 Low, low, breathe and blow,  
 Wind of the western sea!  
 Over the rolling waters go,  
 Come from the dying moon, and blow,  
 Blow him again to me;  
 While my little one, while my pretty one, sleeps.

Sleep and rest, sleep and rest,  
 Father will come to thee soon;  
 Rest, rest, on mother's breast,  
 Father will come to thee soon;  
 Father will come to his babe in the nest,  
 Silver sails all out of the west  
 Under the silver moon:  
 Sleep, my little one, sleep, my pretty one, sleep.

Morn in the white wake of the morning  
 star  
 Came furrowing all the orient into gold.  
 We rose, and each by other drest with  
 care  
 Descended to the court that lay three parts  
 In shadow, but the Muses' heads were  
 touch'd  
 Above the darkness from their native East.

There while we stood beside the fount,  
 and watch'd  
 Or seem'd to watch the dancing bubble,  
 approach'd  
 Melissa, tinged with wan from lack of  
 sleep,  
 Or grief, and glowing round her dewy  
 eyes

The circled Iris of a night of tears;  
 'And fly,' she cried, 'O fly, while yet you  
 may!  
 My mother knows: ' and when I ask'd  
 her 'how,'  
 'My fault,' she wept, 'my fault! and yet  
 not mine;  
 Yet mine in part. O hear me, pardon  
 me.  
 My mother, 'tis her wont from night to  
 night  
 To rail at Lady Psyche and her side.  
 She says the Princess should have been  
 the Head,  
 Herself and Lady Psyche the two arms;  
 And so it was agreed when first they  
 came;  
 But Lady Psyche was the right hand now,  
 And she the left, or not, or seldom used;  
 Hers more than half the students, all the  
 love.  
 And so last night she fell to canvass you:  
*Her* countrywomen! she did not envy her.  
 "Who ever saw such wild barbarians?  
 Girls?—more like men!" and at these  
 words the snake,  
 My secret, seem'd to stir within my breast;  
 And oh, Sirs, could I help it, but my cheek  
 Began to burn and burn, and her lynx eye  
 To fix and make me hotter, till she  
 laugh'd:  
 "O marvellously modest maiden, you!  
 Men! girls, like men! why, if they had  
 been men  
 You need not set your thoughts in rubric  
 thus  
 For wholesale comment." Pardon, I am  
 shamed  
 That I must needs repeat for my excuse  
 What looks so little graceful: "men"  
 (for still  
 My mother went revolving on the word)  
 "And so they are,—very like men in-  
 deed—  
 And with that woman closeted for hours!"  
 Then came these dreadful words out one  
 by one,  
 "Why—these—*are*—men:" I shud-  
 der'd: "and you know it."  
 "O ask me nothing," I said: "And she  
 knows too,  
 And she conceals it." So my mother  
 clutch'd

The truth at once, but with no word from  
me;  
And now thus early risen she goes to  
inform  
The Princess: Lady Psyche will be  
crush'd;  
But you may yet be saved, and therefore  
fly:  
But heal me with your pardon ere you go.'

'What pardon, sweet Melissa, for a  
blush?'

Said Cyril: 'Pale one, blush again: than  
wear  
Those lilies, better blush our lives away.  
Yet let us breathe for one hour more in  
Heaven,'  
He added, 'lest some classic Angel speak  
In scorn of us, "They mounted, Gany-  
medes,  
To tumble, Vulcans, on the second morn."  
But I will melt this marble into wax  
To yield us farther furlough:' and he  
went.

Melissa shook her doubtful curls, and  
thought  
He scarce would prosper. 'Tell us,  
Florian ask'd,  
'How grew this feud betwixt the right  
and left.'  
'O long ago,' she said, 'betwixt these two  
Division smoulders hidden; 'tis my  
mother,  
Too jealous, often fretful as the wind  
Pent in a crevice: much I bear with her:  
I never knew my father, but she says  
(God help her) she was wedded to a fool;  
And still she rail'd against the state of  
things.  
She had the care of Lady Ida's youth,  
And from the Queen's decease she brought  
her up.  
But when your sister came she won the  
heart  
Of Ida: they were still together, grew  
(Forso they said themselves) inoculated;  
Consonant chords that shiver to one note;  
One mind in all things: yet my mother  
still  
Affirms your Psyche thieved her theories,  
And angled with them for her pupil's love:  
She calls her plagiarist; I know not what:

But I must go: I dare not tarry,' and  
light,  
As flies the shadow of a bird, she fled.

Then murmur'd Florian gazing after  
her,  
'An open-hearted maiden, true and pure.  
If I could love, why this were she: how  
pretty  
Her blushing was, and how she blush'd  
again,  
As if to close with Cyril's random wish:  
Not like your Princess cramm'd with  
erring pride,  
Nor like poor Psyche whom she drags in  
tow.'

'The crane,' I said, 'may chatter of the  
crane,  
The dove may murmur of the dove, but I  
An eagle clang an eagle to the sphere.  
My princess, O my princess! true she errs,  
But in her own grand way: being herself  
Three times more noble than three score  
of men,  
She sees herself in every woman else,  
And so she wears her error like a crown  
To blind the truth and me: for her, and  
her,  
Hebes are they to hand ambrosia, mix  
The nectar; but — ah she — whene'er she  
moves  
The Samian Herè rises and she speaks  
A Memnon smitten with the morning  
Sun.'

So saying from the court we paced,  
and gain'd  
The terrace ranged along the Northern  
front,  
And leaning there on those balusters, high  
Above the empurpled champaign, drank  
the gale  
That blown about the foliage underneath,  
And sated with the innumerable rose,  
Beat balm upon our eyelids. Hither came  
Cyril, and yawning 'O hard task,' he  
cried;  
'No fighting shadows here! I forced a  
way  
Thro' solid opposition crabb'd and gnarl'd.  
Better to clear prime forests, heave and  
thump

A league of street in summer solstice  
 down,  
 Than hammer at this reverend gentle-  
 woman.  
 I knock'd and bidden, enter'd; found  
 her there  
 At point to move, and settled in her  
 eyes  
 The green malignant light of coming  
 storm.  
 Sir, I was courteous, every phrase well-  
 oil'd,  
 As man's could be; yet maiden-meek I  
 pray'd  
 Concealment: she demanded who we  
 were,  
 And why we came? I fabled nothing fair,  
 But, your example pilot, told her all.  
 Up went the hush'd amaze of hand and  
 eye.  
 But when I dwelt upon your old affiancè,  
 She answer'd sharply that I talk'd astray.  
 I urged the fierce inscription on the gate,  
 And our three lives. True—we had  
 limed ourselves  
 With open eyes, and we must take the  
 chance.  
 But such extremes, I told her, well might  
 harm  
 The woman's cause. "Not more than  
 now," she said,  
 "So puddled as it is with favouritism."  
 I tried the mother's heart. Shame might  
 befall  
 Melissa, knowing, saying not she knew:  
 Her answer was, "Leave me to deal with  
 that."  
 I spoke of war to come and many deaths,  
 And she replied, her duty was to speak,  
 And duty duty, clear of consequences.  
 I grew discouraged, Sir; but since I knew  
 No rock so hard but that a little wave  
 May beat admission in a thousand years,  
 I recommenced; "Decide not ere you  
 pause.  
 I find you here but in the second place,  
 Some say the third—the authentic foun-  
 dress you.  
 I offer boldly: we will seat you highest:  
 Wink at our advent: help my prince to  
 gain  
 His rightful bride, and here I promise  
 you

Some palace in our land, where you shall  
 reign  
 The head and heart of all our fair she-  
 world,  
 And your great name flow on with broad-  
 ening time  
 For ever." Well, she balanced this a  
 little,  
 And told me she would answer us to-day,  
 Meantime be mute: thus much, nor more  
 I gain'd.

He ceasing, came a message from the  
 Head.  
 'That afternoon the Princess rode to take  
 The dip of certain strata to the North.  
 Would we go with her? we should find  
 the land  
 Worth seeing; and the river made a fall  
 Out yonder:' then she pointed on to  
 where  
 A double hill ran up his furrowy forks  
 Beyond the thick-leaved platans of the  
 vale.

Agreed to, this, the day fled on thro'  
 all  
 Its range of duties to the appointed hour.  
 Then summon'd to the porch we went.  
 She stood  
 Among her maidens, higher by the head,  
 Her back against a pillar, her foot on  
 one  
 Of those tame leopards. Kittenlike he  
 roll'd  
 And paw'd about her sandal. I drew  
 near;  
 I gazed. On a sudden my strange seizure  
 came  
 Upon me, the weird vision of our house:  
 The Princess Ida seem'd a hollow show,  
 Her gay-furr'd cats a painted fantasy,  
 Her college and her maidens empty  
 masks,  
 And I myself the shadow of a dream,  
 For all things were and were not. Yet  
 I felt  
 My heart beat thick with passion and  
 with awe;  
 Then from my breast the involuntary  
 sigh  
 Brake, as she smote me with the light of  
 eyes

That lent my knee desire to kneel, and  
shook

My pulses, till to horse we got, and so  
Went forth in long retinue following up  
The river as it narrow'd to the hills.

I rode beside her and to me she said :  
'O friend, we trust that you esteem'd us  
not

Too harsh to your companion yestermorn;  
Unwillingly we spake.' 'No — not to her,'  
I answer'd, 'but to one of whom we spake  
Your Highness might have seem'd the  
thing you say.'

'Again?' she cried, 'are you ambassa-  
dresses

From him to me? we give you, being  
strange,

A license: speak, and let the topic die.'

I stammer'd that I knew him — could  
have wish'd —

'Our king expects — was there no pre-  
contract?

There is no truer-hearted — ah, you seem  
All he prefigured, and he could not see  
The bird of passage flying south but  
long'd

To follow: surely, if your Highness keep  
Your purport, you will shock him ev'n to  
death,

Or baser courses, children of despair.'

'Poor boy,' she said, 'can he not read  
— no books?

Quoit, tennis, ball — no games? nor deals  
in that

Which men delight in, martial exercise?  
To nurse a blind ideal like a girl,  
Methinks he seems no better than a girl;  
As girls were once, as we ourself have  
been:

We had our dreams; perhaps he mixt  
with them:

We touch on our dead self, nor shun to  
do it,

Being other — since we learnt our mean-  
ing here,

To lift the woman's fall'n divinity  
Upon an even pedestal with man.'

She paused, and added with a haughtier  
smile

'And as to precontracts, we move, my  
friend,

At no man's beck, but know ourself and  
thee,

O Vashti, noble Vashti! Summon'd out  
She kept her state, and left the drunken  
king

To brawl at Shushan underneath the  
palms.'

'Alas your Highness breathes full  
East,' I said,

'On that which leans to you. I know  
the Prince,

I prize his truth: and then how vast a  
work

To assail this gray preëminence of man!  
You grant me license; might I use it?  
think;

Ere half be done perchance your life may  
fail;

Then comes the feebler heiress of your  
plan,

And takes and ruins all; and thus your  
pains

May only make that footprint upon sand  
Which old-recurring waves of prejudice  
Resmooth to nothing: might I dread  
that you,

With only Fame for spouse and your  
great deeds

For issue, yet may live in vain, and miss,  
Meanwhile, what every woman counts  
her due,

Love, children, happiness?'

And she exclaim'd,

'Peace, you young savage of the Northern  
wild!

What! tho' your Prince's love were like  
a God's,

Have we not made ourself the sacrifice?  
You are bold indeed: we are not talk'd  
to thus:

Yet will we say for children, would they  
grew

Like field-flowers everywhere! we like  
them well:

But children die; and let me tell you,  
girl,

Howe'er you babble, great deeds cannot  
die;

They with the sun and moon renew their  
light

For ever, blessing those that look on  
 them.  
 Children — that men may pluck them  
 from our hearts,  
 Kill us with pity, break us with our-  
 selves —  
 O — children — there is nothing upon  
 earth  
 More miserable than she that has a son  
 And sees him err: nor would we work  
 for fame;  
 Tho' she perhaps might reap the applause  
 of Great,  
 Who learns the one *POU STO* whence after-  
 hands  
 May move the world, tho' she herself effect  
 But little: wherefore up and act, nor  
 shrink  
 For fear our solid aim be dissipated  
 By frail successors. Would, indeed, we  
 had been,  
 In lieu of many mortal flies, a race  
 Of giants living, each, a thousand years,  
 That we might see our own work out,  
 and watch  
 The sandy footprint harden into stone.'

I answer'd nothing, doubtful in myself  
 If that strange Poet-princess with her  
 grand  
 Imaginations might at all be won.  
 And she broke out interpreting my  
 thoughts:

'No doubt we seem a kind of monster  
 to you;  
 We are used to that: for women, up till  
 this  
 Cramp'd under worse than South-sea-isle  
 taboo,  
 Dwarfs of the gynæceum, fail so far  
 In high desire, they know not, cannot  
 guess  
 How much their welfare is a passion to us.  
 If we could give them surer, quicker  
 proof—  
 Oh if our end were less achievable  
 By slow approaches, than by single act  
 Of immolation, any phase of death,  
 We were as prompt to spring against the  
 pikes,  
 Or down the fiery gulf as talk of it,  
 To compass our dear sisters' liberties.'

She bow'd as if to veil a noble tear;  
 And up we came to where the river  
 sloped  
 To plunge in cataract, shattering on  
 black blocks  
 A breadth of thunder. O'er it shook the  
 woods,  
 And danced the colour, and, below,  
 stuck out  
 The bones of some vast bulk that lived  
 and roar'd  
 Before man was. She gazed awhile and  
 said,  
 'As these rude bones to us, are we to  
 her  
 That will be.' 'Dare we dream of that,'  
 I ask'd,  
 'Which wrought us, as the workman and  
 his work,  
 That practice betters?' 'How,' she  
 cried, 'you love  
 The metaphysics! read and earn our  
 prize,  
 A golden brooch: beneath an emerald  
 plane  
 Sits Diotima, teaching him that died  
 Of hemlock; our device; wrought to  
 the life;  
 She rapt upon her subject, he on her:  
 For there are schools for all.' 'And  
 yet,' I said,  
 'Methinks I have not found among them  
 all  
 One anatomic.' 'Nay, we thought of  
 that,'  
 She answer'd, 'but it pleased us not: in  
 truth  
 We shudder but to dream our maids  
 should ape  
 Those monstrous males that carve the  
 living hound,  
 And cram him with the fragments of the  
 grave,  
 Or in the dark dissolving human heart,  
 And holy secrets of this microcosm.  
 Dabbling a shameless hand with shame-  
 ful jest,  
 Encarnalise their spirits: yet we know  
 Knowledge is knowledge, and this mat-  
 ter hangs:  
 Howbeit ourself, foreseeing casualty,  
 Nor willing men should come among us,  
 learnt,



For many weary moons before we came,  
 This craft of healing. Were you sick,  
 ourself  
 Would tend upon you. To your ques-  
 tion now,  
 Which touches on the workman and his  
 work.  
 Let there be light and there was light:  
 'tis so:  
 For was, and is, and will be, are but is;  
 And all creation is one act at once,  
 The birth of light: but we that are not  
 all,  
 As parts, can see but parts, now this,  
 now that,  
 And live, perforce, from thought to  
 thought, and make  
 One act a phantom of succession: thus  
 Our weakness somehow shapes the  
 shadow, Time;  
 But in the shadow will we work, and  
 mould  
 The woman to the fuller day.'

She spake

With kindled eyes: we rode a league  
 beyond,  
 And, o'er a bridge of pinewood crossing,  
 came  
 On flowery levels underneath the crag,  
 Full of all beauty. 'O how sweet,' I said  
 (For I was half-oblivious of my mask),  
 'To linger here with one that loved us.'  
 'Yea,'  
 She answer'd, 'or with fair philosophies  
 That lift the fancy; for indeed these  
 fields  
 Are lovely, lovelier not the Elysian  
 lawns,  
 Where paced the Demigods of old, and  
 saw  
 The soft white vapour streak the crowned  
 towers  
 Built to the Sun:' then, turning to her  
 maids,  
 'Pitch our pavilion here upon the sward;  
 Lay out the viands.' At the word, they  
 raised  
 A tent of satin, elaborately wrought  
 With fair Corinna's triumph; here she  
 stood,  
 Engirt with many a florid maiden-cheek,  
 The woman-conqueror; woman-con-  
 quer'd there

The bearded Victor of ten-thousand  
 hymns,  
 And all the men mourn'd at his side:  
 but we  
 Set forth to climb; then, climbing, Cyril  
 kept  
 With Psyche, with Melissa Florian, I  
 With mine affianced. Many a little hand  
 Glanced like a touch of sunshine on the  
 rocks,  
 Many a light foot shone like a jewel  
 set  
 In the dark crag; and then we turn'd,  
 we wound  
 About the cliffs, the copses, out and in,  
 Hammering and clinking, chattering  
 stony names  
 Of shale and hornblende, rag and trap  
 and tuff,  
 Amygdaloid and trachyte, till the Sun  
 Grew broader toward his death and fell,  
 and all  
 The rosy heights came out above the  
 lawns.

## IV.

The splendour falls on castle walls  
 And snowy summits old in story:  
 The long light shakes across the lakes,  
 And the wild cataract leaps in glory.  
 Blow, bugle, blow, set the wild echoes flying,  
 Blow, bugle; answer, echoes, dying, dying,  
 dying.

O hark, O hark! how thin and clear,  
 And thinner, clearer, farther going!  
 O sweet and far from cliff and scar  
 The horns of Elfland faintly blowing!  
 Blow, let us hear the purple glens replying:  
 Blow, bugle; answer, echoes, dying, dying,  
 dying.

O love, they die in yon rich sky,  
 They faint on hill or field or river:  
 Our echoes roll from soul to soul,  
 And grow for ever and for ever.  
 Blow, bugle, blow, set the wild echoes flying,  
 And answer, echoes, answer, dying, dying,  
 dying.

'There sinks the nebulous star we call  
 the Sun,  
 If that hypothesis of theirs be sound,'  
 Said Ida; 'let us down and rest;' and  
 we

Down from the lean and wrinkled precipices,  
 By every coppice-feather'd chasm and cleft,  
 Dropt thro' the ambrosial gloom to where below  
 No bigger than a glow-worm shone the tent  
 Lamp-lit from the inner. Once she lean'd on me,  
 Descending; once or twice she lent her hand,  
 And blissful palpitations in the blood,  
 Stirring a sudden transport rose and fell.

But when we planted level feet, and dipt  
 Beneath the satin dome and enter'd in,  
 There leaning deep in broider'd down we sank  
 Our elbows: on a tripod in the midst  
 A fragrant flame rose, and before us glow'd  
 Fruit, blossom, viand, amber wine, and gold.

Then she, 'Let some one sing to us: lightlier move  
 The minutes fledged with music:' and a maid,  
 Of those beside her, smote her harp, and sang.

'Tears, idle tears, I know not what they mean,  
 Tears from the depth of some divine despair  
 Rise in the heart, and gather to the eyes,  
 In looking on the happy Autumn-fields,  
 And thinking of the days that are no more.

'Fresh as the first beam glittering on a sail,  
 That brings our friends up from the underworld,  
 Sad as the last which reddens over one  
 That sinks with all we love below the verge;  
 So sad, so fresh, the days that are no more.

'Ah, sad and strange as in dark summer dawns  
 The earliest pipe of half-awaken'd birds  
 To dying ears, when unto dying eyes  
 The casement slowly grows a glimmering square;  
 So sad, so strange, the days that are no more.

'Dear as remember'd kisses after death,  
 And sweet as those by hopeless fancy feign'd  
 On lips that are for others; deep as love,  
 Deep as first love, and wild with all regret;  
 O Death in Life, the days that are no more.'

She ended with such passion that the tear,  
 She sang of, shook and fell, an erring pearl  
 Lost in her bosom: but with some disdain  
 Answer'd the Princess, 'If indeed there haunt  
 About the moulder'd lodges of the Past  
 So sweet a voice and vague, fatal to men,  
 Well needs it we should cram our ears with wool  
 And so pace by: but thine are fancies hatch'd  
 In silken-folded idleness; nor is it  
 Wiser to weep a true occasion lost,  
 But trim our sails, and let old bygones be,  
 While down the streams that float us each and all  
 To the issue, goes, like glittering bergs of ice,  
 Throne after throne, and molten on the waste  
 Becomes a cloud: for all things serve their time  
 Toward that great year of equal might and rights,  
 Nor would I fight with iron laws, in the end  
 Found golden: let the past be past; let be  
 Their cancell'd Babels: tho' the rough kex break  
 The starr'd mosaic, and the beard-blown goat  
 Hang on the shaft, and the wild figtree split  
 Their monstrous idols, care not while we hear  
 A trumpet in the distance pealing news  
 Of better, and Hope, a poisoning eagle, burns  
 Above the unrisen morrow:' then to me;  
 'Know you no song of your own land,' she said,  
 'Not such as moans about the retrospect,  
 But deals with the other distance and the hues  
 Of promise; not a death's-head at the wine.'

Then I remember'd one myself had  
made,  
What time I watch'd the swallow wing-  
ing south  
From mine own land, part made long  
since, and part  
Now while I sang, and maidenlike as  
far  
As I could ape their treble, did I sing.

'O Swallow, Swallow, flying, flying South,  
Fly to her, and fall upon her gilded eaves,  
And tell her, tell her, what I tell to thee.

'O tell her, Swallow, thou that knowest each,  
That bright and fierce and fickle is the South,  
And dark and true and tender is the North.

'O Swallow, Swallow, if I could follow, and  
light  
Upon her lattice, I would pipe and trill,  
And cheep and twitter twenty million loves.

'O were I thou that she might take me in,  
And lay me on her bosom, and her heart  
Would rock the snowy cradle till I died.

'Why lingereth she to clothe her heart with love,  
Delaying as the tender ash delays  
To clothe herself, when all the woods are green?

'O tell her, Swallow, that thy brood is flown:  
Say to her, I do but wanton in the South,  
But in the North long since my nest is made.

'O tell her, brief is life but love is long,  
And brief the sun of summer in the North,  
And brief the moon of beauty in the South.

'O Swallow, flying from the golden woods,  
Fly to her, and pipe and woo her, and make her  
mine,  
And tell her, tell her, that I follow thee.'

I ceased, and all the ladies, each at  
each,  
Like the Ithacensian suitors in old time,  
Stared with great eyes, and laugh'd with  
alien lips,  
And knew not what they meant; for still  
my voice  
Rang false: but smiling, 'Not for thee,'  
she said,  
'O Bulbul, any rose of Gulistan  
Shall burst her veil: marsh-divers, rather,  
maid,

Shall croak thee sister, or the meadow-  
crake  
Grate her harsh kindred in the grass:  
and this

A mere love-poem! O for such, my friend,  
We hold them slight: they mind us of  
the time

When we made bricks in Egypt. Knaves  
are men,

That lute and flute fantastic tenderness,  
And dress the victim to the offering up.  
And paint the gates of Hell with Paradise,  
And play the slave to gain the tyranny.  
Poor soul! I had a maid of honour once;  
She wept her true eyes blind for such a  
one,

A rogue of canzonets and serenades.  
I loved her. Peace be with her. She  
is dead.

So they blaspheme the muse! But great  
is song

Used to great ends: ourself have often  
tried

Valkyrian hymns, or into rhythm have  
dash'd

The passion of the prophetess; for song  
Is duer unto freedom, force and growth  
Of spirit than to junketing and love.

Love is it? Would this same mock-love,  
and this

Mock-Hymen were laid up like winter  
bats,

Till all men grew to rate us at our worth,  
Not vassals to be beat, nor pretty babes  
To be dandled, no, but living wills, and  
sphered

Whole in ourselves and owed to none.  
Enough!

But now to leaven play with profit, you,  
Know you no song, the true growth of  
your soil,

That gives the manners of your country-  
women?'

She spoke and turn'd her sumptuous  
head with eyes

Of shining expectation fixt on mine.  
Then while I dragg'd my brains for such  
a song,

Cyril, with whom the bell-mouth'd glass  
had wrought,

Or master'd by the sense of sport, began  
To troll a careless, careless tavern-catch

Of Moll and Meg, and strange experiences  
 Unmeet for ladies. Florian nodded at  
 him,  
 I frowning; Psyche flush'd and wann'd  
 and shook;  
 The ladylike Melissa droop'd her brows;  
 'Forbear,' the Princess cried; 'Forbear,  
 Sir, I;  
 And heated thro' and thro' with wrath  
 and love,  
 I smote him on the breast; he started  
 up;  
 There rose a shriek as of a city sack'd;  
 Melissa clamour'd, 'Flee the death;' 'To  
 horse,'  
 Said Ida; 'home! to horse!' and fled,  
 as flies  
 A troop of snowy doves athwart the dusk,  
 When some one batters at the dovecote  
 doors,  
 Disorderly the women. Alone I stood  
 With Florian, cursing Cyril, vext at heart,  
 In the pavilion: there like parting hopes  
 I heard them passing from me: hoof by  
 hoof,  
 And every hoof a knell to my desires,  
 Clang'd on the bridge; and then another  
 shriek,  
 'The Head, the Head, the Princess, O  
 the Head!'  
 For blind with rage she miss'd the plank,  
 and roll'd  
 In the river. Out I sprang from glow to  
 gloom:  
 There whirl'd her white robe like a  
 blossom'd branch  
 Rapt to the horrible fall: a glance I  
 gave,  
 No more; but woman-vested as I was  
 Plunged; and the flood drew; yet I  
 caught her; then  
 Oaring one arm, and bearing in my left  
 The weight of all the hopes of half the  
 world,  
 Strove to buffet to land in vain. A tree  
 Was half-disrooted from his place and  
 stoop'd  
 To drench his dark locks in the gurgling  
 wave  
 Mid-channel. Right on this we drove  
 and caught,  
 And grasping down the boughs I gain'd  
 the shore.

There stood her maidens glimmeringly  
 group'd  
 In the hollow bank. One reaching for-  
 ward drew  
 My burthen from mine arms; they cried  
 'she lives!'  
 They bore her back into the tent: but I,  
 So much a kind of shame within me  
 wrought,  
 Not yet endured to meet her opening  
 eyes,  
 Nor found my friends; but push'd alone  
 on foot  
 (For since her horse was lost I left her  
 mine)  
 Across the woods, and less from Indian  
 craft  
 Than beelike instinct hiveward, found at  
 length  
 The garden portals. Two great statues,  
 Art  
 And Science, Caryatids, lifted up  
 A weight of emblem, and betwixt were  
 valves  
 Of open-work in which the hunter rued  
 His rash intrusion, manlike, but his  
 brows  
 Had sprouted, and the branches there-  
 upon  
 Spread out at top, and grinly spiked the  
 gates.

A little space was left between the  
 horns,  
 Thro' which I clamber'd o'er at top with  
 pain,  
 Dropt on the sward, and up the linden  
 walks,  
 And, tost on thoughts that changed from  
 hue to hue,  
 Now poring on the glowworm, now the  
 star,  
 I paced the terrace, till the Bear had  
 wheel'd  
 Thro' a great arc his seven slow suns.

A step  
 Of lightest echo, then a loftier form  
 Than female, moving thro' the uncertain  
 gloom,  
 Disturb'd me with the doubt 'if this were  
 she,'  
 But it was Florian. 'Hist, O hist,' he  
 said,

'They seek us: out so late is out of rules.

Moreover "seize the strangers" is the cry.  
How came you here?' I told him: 'I,'  
said he,

'Last of the train, a moral leper, I,  
To whom none spake, half-sick at heart,  
return'd.

Arriving all confused among the rest  
With hooded brows I crept into the hall,  
And, couch'd behind a Judith, under-  
neath

The head of Holofernes peep'd and saw.  
Girl after girl was call'd to trial: each  
Disclaim'd all knowledge of us: last of  
all,

Melissa: trust me, Sir, I pitied her.  
She, question'd if she knew us men, at  
first

Was silent; closer prest, denied it not:  
And then, demanded if her mother  
knew,

Or Psyche, she affirm'd not, or denied:  
From whence the Royal mind, familiar  
with her,

Easily gather'd either guilt. She sent  
For Psyche, but she was not there; she  
call'd

For Psyche's child to cast it from the  
doors;

She sent for Blanche to accuse her face  
to face;

And I slipt out: but whither will you  
now?

And where are Psyche, Cyril? both are  
fled:

What, if together? that were not so well.  
Would rather we had never come! I  
dread

His wildness, and the chances of the  
dark.'

'And yet,' I said, 'you wrong him  
more than I

That struck him: this is proper to the  
clown,

Tho' smock'd, or furr'd and purpled,  
still the clown,

To harm the thing that trusts him, and  
to shame

That which he says he loves: for Cyril,  
howe'er

He deal in frolic, as to-night — the song

Might have been worse and sinn'd in  
grosser lips

Beyond all pardon — as it is, I hold  
These flashes on the surface are not he.  
He has a solid base of temperament:  
But as the waterlily starts and slides  
Upon the level in little puffs of wind,  
Tho' anchor'd to the bottom, such is  
he.'

Scarce had I ceased when from a tama-  
risk near

Two Proctors leapt upon us, crying,  
'Names:'

He, standing still, was clutch'd; but I  
began

To thrid the musky-circled mazes, wind  
And double in and out the boles, and  
race

By all the fountains: fleet I was of foot:  
Before me shower'd the rose in flakes;  
behind

I heard the puff'd pursuer; at mine ear  
Bubbled the nightingale and heeded  
not,

And secret laughter tickled all my soul.  
At last I hook'd my ankle in a vine,  
That claspt the feet of a Mnemosyne,  
And falling on my face was caught and  
known.

They haled us to the Princess where  
she sat

High in the hall: above her droop'd a  
lamp,

And made the single jewel on her brow  
Burn like the mystic fire on a mast-  
head,

Prophet of storm: a handmaid on each  
side

Bow'd toward her, combing out her long  
black hair

Damp from the river; and close behind  
her stood

Eight daughters of the plough, stronger  
than men,

Huge women blowzed with health, and  
wind, and rain,

And labour. Each was like a Druid  
rock;

Or like a spire of land that stands apart  
Cleft from the main, and wail'd about  
with mews.

Then, as we came, the crowd dividing  
 clove  
 An advent to the throne: and there-  
 beside,  
 Half-naked as if caught at once from  
 bed  
 And tumbled on the purple footcloth, lay  
 The lily-shining child; and on the left,  
 Bow'd on her palms and folded up from  
 wrong,  
 Her round white shoulder shaken with  
 her sobs,  
 Melissa knelt; but Lady Blanche erect  
 Stood up and spake, an affluent orator.

'It was not thus, O Princess, in old  
 days:  
 You prized my counsel, lived upon my  
 lips:  
 I led you then to all the Castalies;  
 I fed you with the milk of every Muse;  
 I loved you like this kneeler, and you  
 me  
 Your second mother: those were gra-  
 cious times.  
 Then came your new friend: you began  
 to change—  
 I saw it and grieved—to slacken and to  
 cool;  
 Till taken with her seeming openness  
 You turn'd your warmer currents all to  
 her,  
 To me you froze: this was my meed for  
 all.  
 Yet I bore up in part from ancient love,  
 And partly that I hoped to win you back,  
 And partly conscious of my own deserts,  
 And partly that you were my civil head,  
 And chiefly you were born for something  
 great,  
 In which I might your fellow-worker be,  
 When time should serve; and thus a  
 noble scheme  
 Grew up from seed we two long since  
 had sown;  
 In us true growth, in her a Jonah's gourd,  
 Up in one night and due to sudden sun:  
 We took this palace; but even from the  
 first  
 You stood in your own light and darken'd  
 mine.  
 What student came but that you planed  
 her path

To Lady Psyche, younger, not so wise,  
 A foreigner, and I your countrywoman,  
 I your old friend and tried, she new in all?  
 But still her lists were swell'd and mine  
 were lean;  
 Yet I bore up in hope she would be  
 known:  
 Then came these wolves: *they* knew her:  
*they* endured,  
 Long-closeted with her the yestermorn,  
 To tell her what they were, and she to  
 hear:  
 And me none told: not less to an eye  
 like mine  
 A lidless watcher of the public weal,  
 Last night, their mask was patent, and  
 my foot  
 Was to you: but I thought again: I fear'd  
 To meet a cold "We thank you, we shall  
 hear of it  
 From Lady Psyche:" you had gone to  
 her,  
 She told, perforce; and winning easy  
 grace,  
 No doubt, for slight delay, remain'd  
 among us  
 In our young nursery still unknown, the  
 stem  
 Less grain than touchwood, while my  
 honest heat  
 Were all miscounted as malignant haste  
 To push my rival out of place and power.  
 But public use required she should be  
 known;  
 And since my oath was ta'en for public  
 use,  
 I broke the letter of it to keep the sense.  
 I spoke not then at first, but watch'd  
 them well,  
 Saw that they kept apart, no mischief  
 done;  
 And yet this day (tho' you should hate  
 me for it)  
 I came to tell you; found that you had  
 gone,  
 Ridd'n to the hills, she likewise: now, I  
 thought,  
 That surely she will speak; if not, then I:  
 Did she? These monsters blazon'd what  
 they were,  
 According to the coarseness of their kind,  
 For thus I hear; and known at last (my  
 work)



And full of cowardice and guilty shame,  
I grant in her some sense of shame, she  
flies;

And I remain on whom to wreak your  
rage,

I, that have lent my life to build up yours,  
I that have wasted here health, wealth,  
and time,

And talent, I — you know it — I will not  
boast:

Dismiss me, and I prophesy your plan,  
Divorced from my experience, will be  
chaff

For every gust of chance, and men will  
say

We did not know the real light, but  
chased

The wisp that flickers where no foot can  
tread.'

She ceased: the Princess answer'd  
coldly, 'Good:

Your oath is broken: we dismiss you: go.  
For this lost lamb (she pointed to the  
child)

Our mind is changed: we take it to our-  
self.'

Thereat the Lady stretch'd a vulture  
throat,

And shot from crooked lips a haggard  
smile.

'The plan was mine. I built the nest,'  
she said,

'To hatch the cuckoo. Rise!' and  
stoop'd to updrag

Melissa: she, half on her mother propt,  
Half-drooping from her, turn'd her face,  
and cast

A liquid look on Ida, full of prayer,  
Which melted Florian's fancy as she  
hung,

A Niobean daughter, one arm out,  
Appealing to the bolts of Heaven; and  
while

We gazed upon her came a little stir  
About the doors, and on a sudden rush'd  
Among us, out of breath, as one pursued,  
A woman-post in flying raiment. Fear  
Stared in her eyes, and chalk'd her face,  
and wing'd

Her transit to the throne, whereby she  
fell

Delivering seal'd dispatches which the  
Head

Took half-amazed, and in her lion's mood  
Tore open, silent we with blind surmise  
Regarding, while she read, till over brow  
And cheek and bosom brake the wrath-  
ful bloom

As of some fire against a stormy cloud,  
When the wild peasant rights himself,  
the rick

Flames, and his anger reddens in the  
heavens;

For anger most it seem'd, while now her  
breast,

Beaten with some great passion at her  
heart,

Palpitated, her hand shook, and we heard  
In the dead hush the papers that she held  
Rustle: at once the lost lamb at her feet  
Sent out a bitter bleating for its dam;

The plaintive cry jarr'd on her ire; she  
crush'd

The scrolls together, made a sudden turn  
As if to speak, but, utterance failing her,  
She whirl'd them on to me, as who  
should say

'Read,' and I read — two letters — one  
her sire's.

'Fair daughter, when we sent the  
Prince your way

We knew not your ungracious laws,  
which learnt,

We, conscious of what temper you are  
built,

Came all in haste to hinder wrong, but  
fell

Into his father's hands, who has this  
night,

You lying close upon his territory,  
Slipt round and in the dark invested you,  
And here he keeps me hostage for his  
son.'

The second was my father's running  
thus:

'You have our son: touch not a hair' of  
his head:

Render him up unscathed: give him your  
hand:

Cleave to your contract: tho' indeed we  
hear

You hold the woman is the better man;

A rampant heresy, such as if it spread  
 Would make all women kick against  
 their Lords  
 Thro' all the world, and which might  
 well deserve  
 That we this night should pluck your  
 palace down;  
 And we will do it, unless you send us  
 back  
 Our son, on the instant, whole.'  
 So far I read;  
 And then stood up and spoke impetu-  
 ously.

'O not to pry and peer on your reserve,  
 But led by golden wishes, and a hope  
 The child of regal compact, did I break  
 Your precinct; not a scorner of your sex  
 But venerator, zealous it should be  
 All that it might be: hear me, for I hear,  
 Tho' man, yet human, whatso'er your  
 wrongs,  
 From the flaxen curl to the gray lock a  
 life  
 Less mine than yours: my nurse would  
 tell me of you;  
 I habbled for you, as babies for the moon,  
 Vague brightness; when a boy, you  
 stoop'd to me  
 From all high places, lived in all fair  
 lights,  
 Came in long breezes rapt from inmost  
 south  
 And blown to inmost north; at eve and  
 dawn  
 With Ida, Ida, Ida, rang the woods;  
 The leader wildswan in among the stars  
 Would clang it, and lapt in wreaths of  
 glowworm light  
 The mellowbreaker murmur'd Ida. Now,  
 Because I would have reach'd you, had  
 you been  
 Sphered up with Cassiopëia, or the en-  
 throned  
 Persephonè in Hades, now at length,  
 Those winters of abeyance all worn out,  
 A man I came to see you: but, indeed,  
 Not in this frequency can I lend full  
 tongue,  
 O noble Ida, to those thoughts that wait  
 On you, their centre: let me say but this,  
 That many a famous man and woman,  
 town

And landskip, have I heard of, after seen  
 The dwarfs of presage: tho' when known,  
 there grew  
 Another kind of beauty in detail  
 Made them worth knowing; but in you  
 I found  
 My boyish dream involved and dazzled  
 down  
 And master'd, while that after-beauty  
 makes  
 Such head from act to act, from hour to  
 hour,  
 Within me, that except you slay me here,  
 According to your bitter statute-book,  
 I cannot cease to follow you, as they say  
 The seal does music; who desire you  
 more  
 Than growing boys their manhood; dy-  
 ing lips,  
 With many thousand matters left to do,  
 The breath of life; O more than poor  
 men wealth,  
 Than sick men health — yours, yours, not  
 mine — but half  
 Without you; with you, whole; and of  
 those halves  
 You worthiest; and howe'er you block  
 and bar  
 Your heart with system out from mine, I  
 hold  
 That it becomes no man to nurse despair,  
 But in the teeth of clench'd antagonisms  
 To follow up the worthiest till he die:  
 Yet that I came not all unauthorised  
 Behold your father's letter.'

On one knee  
 Kneeling, I gave it, which she caught,  
 and dash'd  
 Unopen'd at her feet: a tide of fierce  
 Invective seem'd to wait behind her lips,  
 As waits a river level with the dam  
 Ready to burst and flood the world with  
 foam:  
 And so she would have spoken, but there  
 rose  
 A hubbub in the court of half the maids  
 Gather'd together: from the illumined hall  
 Long lanes of splendour slanted o'er a  
 press  
 Of snowy shoulders, thick as herded  
 ewes,  
 And rainbow robes, and gems and gem-  
 like eyes,

And gold and golden heads; they to and  
 fro  
 Fluctuated, as flowers in storm, some red,  
 some pale,  
 All open-mouth'd, all gazing to the light,  
 Some crying there was an army in the  
 land,  
 And some that men were in the very  
 walls,  
 And some they cared not; till a clamour  
 grew  
 As of a new-world Babel, woman-built,  
 And worse-confounded: high above them  
 stood  
 The placid marble Muses, looking peace.

Not peace she look'd, the Head: but  
 rising up  
 Robed in the long night of her deep hair,  
 so  
 To the open window moved, remaining  
 there  
 Fixt like a beacon-tower above the waves  
 Of tempest, when the crimson-rolling eye  
 Glares ruin, and the wild birds on the  
 light  
 Dash themselves dead. She stretch'd  
 her arms and call'd  
 Across the tumult and the tumult fell.

'What fear ye, brawlers? am not I  
 your Head?  
 On me, me, me, the storm first breaks:  
 I dare  
 All these male thunderbolts: what is it  
 ye fear?  
 Peace! there are those to avenge us and  
 they come:  
 If not,—myself were like enough, O  
 girls,  
 To unfurl the maiden banner of our rights,  
 And clad in iron burst the ranks of war,  
 Or, falling, protomartyr of our cause,  
 Die: yet I blame you not so much for  
 fear;  
 Six thousand years of fear have made you  
 that  
 From which I would redeem you: but  
 for those  
 That stir this hubbub—you and you—I  
 know  
 Your faces there in the crowd—to-morrow  
 mourn

We hold a great convention: then shall  
 they  
 That love their voices more than duty,  
 learn  
 With whom they deal, dismiss'd in shame  
 to live  
 No wiser than their mothers, household  
 stuff,  
 Live chattels, mincers of each other's  
 fame,  
 Full of weak poison, turnspits for the  
 clown,  
 The drunkard's football, laughing-stocks  
 of Time,  
 Whose brains are in their hands and in  
 their heels,  
 But fit to flaunt, to dress, to dance, to  
 thrum,  
 To tramp, to scream, to burnish, and to  
 scour,  
 For ever slaves at home and fools abroad.'

She, ending, waved her hands: thereat  
 the crowd  
 Muttering, dissolved: then with a smile,  
 that look'd  
 A stroke of cruel sunshine on the cliff,  
 When all the glens are drown'd in azure  
 gloom  
 Of thunder-shower, she floated to us and  
 said:

'You have done well and like a  
 gentleman,  
 And like a prince: you have our thanks  
 for all:  
 And you look well too in your woman's  
 dress:  
 Well have you done and like a gentleman.  
 You saved our life: we owe you bitter  
 thanks:  
 Better have died and spilt our bones in  
 the flood—  
 Then men had said—but now—What  
 hinders me  
 To take such bloody vengeance on you  
 both?—  
 Yet since our father—Wasps in our good  
 hive,  
 You would-be quenchers of the light to  
 be,  
 Barbarians, grosser than your native  
 bears—

O would I had his sceptre for one hour!  
You that have dared to break our bound,  
and gull'd

Our servants, wrong'd and lied and  
thwarted us —

I wed with thee! I bound by precontract  
Your bride, your bonds slave! not tho' all  
the gold

That veins the world were pack'd to  
make your crown,

And every spoken tongue should lord  
you. Sir,

Your falsehood and yourself are hateful  
to us:

I trample on your offers and on you:

Begone: we will not look upon you more.  
Here, push them out at gates.'

In wrath she spake.

Then those eight mighty daughters of the  
plough

Bent their broad faces toward us and  
address'd

Their motion: twice I sought to plead  
my cause,

But on my shoulder hung their heavy  
hands,

The weight of destiny: so from her face  
They push'd us, down the steps, and  
thro' the court,

And with grim laughter thrust us out at  
gates.

We cross'd the street and gain'd a petty  
mound

Beyond it, whence we saw the lights and  
heard

The voices murmuring. While I listen'd,  
came

On a sudden the weird seizure and the  
doubt:

I seem'd to move among a world of  
ghosts;

The Princess with her monstrous woman-  
guard,

The jest and earnest working side by side,  
The cataract and the tumult and the kings  
Were shadows; and the long fantastic  
night

With all its doings had and had not been,  
And all things were and were not.

This went by  
As strangely as it came, and on my spirits  
Settled a gentle cloud of melancholy;

Not long; I shook it off; for spite of  
cloubts

And sudden ghostly shadowings I was one  
To whom the touch of all mischance but  
came

As night to him that sitting on a hill  
Sees the midsummer, midnight, Norway  
sun

Set into sunrise; then we moved away.

Thy voice is heard thro' rolling drums,

That beat to battle where he stands;

Thy face across his fancy comes,

And gives the battle to his hands:

A moment, while the trumpets blow,

He sees his brood about thy knee;

The next, like fire he meets the foe,

And strikes him dead for thine and thee.

So Lilia sang: we thought her half-  
possess'd,

She struck such warbling fury thro' the  
words;

And, after, feigning pique at what she  
call'd

The raiillery, or grotesque, or false sub-  
lime —

Like one that wishes at a dance to change  
The music — clapt her hands and cried

for war,  
Or some grand fight to kill and make an  
end:

And he that next inherited the tale  
Half turning to the broken statue, said,

'Sir Ralph has got your colours: if I prove  
Your knight, and fight your battle, what

for me?'

It chanced, her empty glove upon the  
tomb

Lay by her like a model of her hand.  
She took it and she flung it. 'Fight,'

she said,  
'And make us all we would be, great and  
good.'

He knightlike in his cap instead of  
casque,

A cap of Tyrol borrow'd from the hall,  
Arranged the favour, and assumed the  
Prince.

v.

Now, scarce three paces measured from  
the mound,

We stumbled on a stationary voice,

And 'Stand, who goes?' 'Two from  
the palace,' I.  
'The second two: they wait,' he said,  
'pass on;  
His Highness wakes:' and one, that  
clash'd in arms,  
By glimmering lanes and walls of canvas  
led  
Threading the soldier-city, till we heard  
The drowsy folds of our great ensign  
shake  
From blazon'd lions o'er the imperial tent  
Whispers of war.

Entering, the sudden light  
Dazed me half-blind: I stood and seem'd  
to hear,  
As in a poplar grove when a light wind  
wakes  
A lisping of the innumerable leaf and dies,  
Each hissing in his neighbour's ear; and  
then  
A strangled titter, out of which there  
brake  
On all sides, clamouring etiquette to  
death,  
Unmeasured mirth; while now the two  
old kings  
Began to wag their baldness up and  
down,  
The fresh young captains flash'd their  
glittering teeth,  
The huge bush-bearded Barons heaved  
and blew,  
And slain with laughter roll'd the gilded  
Squire.

At length my Sire, his rough cheek  
wet with tears,  
Panted from weary sides, 'King, you are  
free!  
We did but keep you surety for our son,  
If this be he,—or a draggled mawkin,  
thou,  
That tends her bristled grunters in the  
sludge:'  
For I was drench'd with ooze, and torn  
with briers,  
More crumpled than a poppy from the  
sheath,  
And all one rag, disprinc'd from head to  
heel.  
Then some one sent beneath his vaulted  
palm

A whisper'd jest to some one near him,  
'Look,  
He has been among his shadows.' 'Satan  
take  
The old women and their shadows! (thus  
the King  
Roar'd) make yourself a man to fight with  
men.  
Go: Cyril told us all.'

As boys that slink  
From ferule and the trespass-chiding eye,  
Away we stole, and transient in a trice  
From what was left of faded woman-  
slough  
To sheathing splendours and the golden  
scale  
Of harness, issued in the sun, that now  
Leapt from the dewy shoulders of the  
Earth,  
And hit the Northern hills. Here Cyril  
met us.  
A little shy at first, but by and by  
We twain, with mutual pardon ask'd and  
given  
For stroke and song, resolder'd peace,  
whereon  
Follow'd his tale. Amazed he fled away  
Thro' the dark land, and later in the night  
Had come on Psyche weeping: 'then we  
fell  
Into your father's hand, and there she  
lies,  
But will not speak, nor stir.'

He show'd a tent  
A stone-shot off: we enter'd in, and there  
Among piled arms and rough accoutre-  
ments,  
Pitiful sight, wrapp'd in a soldier's cloak,  
Like some sweet sculpture draped from  
head to foot,  
And push'd by rude hands from its  
pedestal,  
All her fair length upon the ground she  
lay:  
And at her head a follower of the camp,  
A char'd and wrinkled piece of woman-  
hood,  
Sat watching like a watcher by the dead.

Then Florian knelt, and 'Come,' he  
whisper'd to her,  
'Lift up your head, sweet sister: lie not  
thus.

What have you done but right? you could  
 not slay  
 Me, nor your prince: look up: be com-  
 forted:  
 Sweet is it to have done the thing one  
 ought,  
 When fall'n in darker ways.' And like-  
 wise I:  
 'Be comforted: have I not lost her too,  
 In whose least act abides the nameless  
 charm  
 That none has else for me?' She heard,  
 she moved,  
 She moan'd, a folded voice; and up she  
 sat,  
 And raised the cloak from brows as pale  
 and smooth  
 As those that mourn half-shrouded over  
 death  
 In deathless marble. 'Her,' she said,  
 'my friend—  
 Parted from her—betray'd her cause  
 and mine—  
 Where shall I breathe? why kept ye not  
 your faith?  
 O base and bad! what comfort? none  
 for me!'

To whom remorseful Cyril, 'Yet I pray  
 Take comfort: live, dear lady, for your  
 child!'  
 At which she lifted up her voice and cried.

'Ah me, my babe, my blossom, ah, my  
 child,  
 My one sweet child, whom I shall see no  
 more!  
 For now will cruel Ida keep her back;  
 And either she will die from want of care,  
 Or sicken with ill-usage, when they say  
 The child is hers—for every little fault,  
 The child is hers; and they will beat my  
 girl  
 Remembering her mother: O my flower!  
 Or they will take her, they will make her  
 hard,  
 And she will pass me by in after-life  
 With some cold reverence worse than  
 were she dead.  
 Ill mother that I was to leave her there,  
 To lag behind, scared by the cry they  
 made,  
 The horror of the shame among them all:  
 But I will go and sit beside the doors,

And make a wild petition night and day,  
 Until they hate to hear me like a wind  
 Wailing for ever, till they open to me,  
 And lay my little blossom at my feet,  
 My babe, my sweet Aglaia, my one child:  
 And I will take her up and go my way,  
 And satisfy my soul with kissing her:  
 Ah! what might that man not deserve of  
 me  
 Who gave me back my child?' 'Be  
 comforted,'  
 Said Cyril, 'you shall have it;' but again  
 She veil'd her brows, and prone she sank,  
 and so  
 Like tender things that being caught feign  
 death,  
 Spoke not, nor stir'd.

By this a murmur ran  
 Thro' all the camp and inward raced the  
 scouts  
 With rumour of Prince Arac hard at hand.  
 We left her by the woman, and without  
 Found the gray kings at parle: and 'Look  
 you,' cried  
 My father, 'that our compact be fulfill'd:  
 You have spoilt this child; she laughs at  
 you and man:  
 She wrongs herself, her sex, and me, and  
 him:  
 But red-faced war has rods of steel and  
 fire;  
 She yields, or war.'

Then Gama turn'd to me:  
 'We fear, indeed, you spent a stormy  
 time  
 With our strange girl: and yet they say  
 that still  
 You love her. Give us, then, your mind  
 at large:  
 How say you, war or not?'

'Not war, if possible,  
 O king,' I said, 'lest from the abuse of  
 war,  
 The desecrated shrine, the trampled year,  
 The smouldering homestead, and the  
 household flower  
 Torn from the lintel—all the common  
 wrong—  
 A smoke go up thro' which I loom to her  
 Three times a monster: now she lightens  
 scorn  
 At him that mars her plan, but then  
 would hate



(And every voice she talk'd with ratify it,  
And every face she look'd on justify it)  
The general foe. More soluble is this  
knot,

By gentleness than war. I want her love.  
What were I nigher this altho' we dash'd  
Your cities into shards with catapults,  
She would not love; — or brought her  
chain'd, a slave,

The lifting of whose eyelash is my lord,  
Not ever would she love; but brooding  
turn

The book of scorn, till all my fitting  
chance

Were caught within the record of her  
wrongs,

And crush'd to death: and rather, Sire,  
than this

I would the old God of war himself were  
dead,

Forgotten, rusting on his iron hills,  
Rotting on some wild shore with ribs of  
wreck,

Or like an old-world mammoth bulk'd in  
ice,

Not to be molten out.'

And roughly spake

My father, 'Tut, you know them not, the  
girls.

Boy, when I hear you prate I almost think  
That idiot legend credible. Look you,  
Sir!

Man is the hunter; woman is his game:  
The sleek and shining creatures of the  
chase,

We hunt them for the beauty of their  
skins;

They love us for it, and we ride them  
down.

Wheedling and siding with them! Out!  
for shame!

Boy, there's no rose that's half so dear to  
them

As he that does the thing they dare not do,  
Breathing and sounding beauteous battle,  
comes

With the air of the trumpet round him,  
and leaps in

Among the women, snares them by the  
score

Flatter'd and fluster'd, wins, tho' dash'd  
with death

He reddens what he kisses: thus I won

Your mother, a good mother, a good wife,  
Worth winning; but this firebrand —  
gentleness

To such as her! if Cyril spake her true,  
To catch a dragon in a cherry net,  
To trip a tigress with a gossamer,  
Were wisdom to it.'

'Yea but Sire,' I cried,

'Wild natures need wise curbs. The  
soldier? No:

What dares not Ida do that she should  
prize

The soldier? I beheld her, when she rose  
The yesternight, and storming in extremes,  
Stood for her cause, and flung defiance  
down

Gagelike to man, and had not shunn'd the  
death,

No, not the soldier's: yet I hold her, king,  
True woman: but you clash them all in  
one,

That have as many differences as we.

The violet varies from the lily as far  
As oak from elm: one loves the soldier,  
one

The silken priest of peace, one this, one  
that,

And some unworthily; their sinless faith,  
A maiden moon that sparkles on a sty,  
Glorifying clown and satyr; whence they  
need

More breadth of culture: is not Ida right?  
They worth it? truer to the law within?  
Severer in the logic of a life?

Twice as magnetic to sweet influences  
Of earth and heaven? and she of whom  
you speak,

My mother, looks as whole as some serene  
Creation minted in the golden moods  
Of sovereign artists; not a thought, a  
touch,

But pure as lines of green that streak the  
white

Of the first snowdrop's inner leaves; I say,  
Not like the piebald miscellany, man,  
Bursts of great heart and slips in sensual  
mire,

But whole and one: and take them all-  
in-all,

Were we ourselves but half as good, as  
kind,

As truthful, much that Ida claims as  
right

Had ne'er been mooted, but as frankly  
 theirs  
 As dues of Nature. To our point: not  
 war:

Lest I lose all.'

'Nay, nay, you spake but sense,'  
 Said Gama. 'We remember love ourself  
 In our sweet youth; we did not rate him  
 then

This red-hot iron to be shaped with blows.  
 You talk almost like *Ida*: *she* can talk;  
 And there is something in it as you say:  
 But you talk kindlier: we esteem you for  
 it. —

He seems a gracious and a gallant Prince,  
 I would he had our daughter: for the  
 rest,

Our own detention, why, the causes  
 weigh'd,

Fatherly fears — you used us courteously —  
 We would do much to gratify your  
 Prince —

We pardon it; and for your ingress here  
 Upon the skirt and fringe of our fair  
 land,

You did but come as goblins in the night,  
 Nor in the furrow broke the ploughman's  
 head,

Nor burnt the grange, nor buss'd the  
 milking-maid,

Nor robb'd the farmer of his bowl of  
 cream:

But let your Prince (our royal word  
 upon it,

He comes back safe) ride with us to our  
 lines,

And speak with Arac: Arac's word is  
 thrice

As ours with *Ida*: something may be  
 done —

I know not what — and ours shall see us  
 friends.

You, likewise, our late guests, if so you  
 will,

Follow us: who knows? we four may  
 build some plan

Foursquare to opposition.'

Here he reach'd

White hands of farewell to my sire, who  
 growl'd

An answer which, half-muffled in his  
 beard,

Let so much out as gave us leave to go.

Then rode we with the old king across  
 the lawns

Beneath huge trees, a thousand rings of  
 Spring

In every bole, a song on every spray  
 Of birds that piped their Valentines, and  
 woke

Desire in me to infuse my tale of love  
 In the old king's ears, who promised  
 help, and oozed

All o'er with honey'd answer as we rode  
 And blossom-flagrant slipt the heavy dews  
 Gather'd by night and peace with each  
 light air

On our mail'd heads: but other thoughts  
 than peace

Burnt in us, when we saw the embattled  
 squares,

And squadrons of the Prince, trampling  
 the flowers

With clamour: for among them rose a  
 cry

As if to greet the king; they made a  
 halt;

The horses yell'd; they clash'd their  
 arms; the drum

Beat; merrily-blowing shrill'd the mar-  
 tial fife;

And in the blast and bray of the long  
 horn

And serpent-throated bugle, undulated  
 The banner: anon to meet us lightly  
 pranced

Three captains out; nor ever had I seen  
 Such thews of men: the midmost and  
 the highest

Was Arac: all about his motion clung  
 The shadow of his sister, as the beam

Of the East, that play'd upon them, made  
 them glance

Like those three stars of the airy Giant's  
 zone,

That glitter burnish'd by the frosty dark;  
 And as the fiery Sirius alters hue,

And bickers into red and emerald,  
 shone

Their morions, wash'd with morning, as  
 they came.

And I that prated peace, when first I  
 heard

War-music, felt the blind wildbeast of  
 force,

Whose home is in the sinews of a man,  
 Stir in me as to strike: then took the  
 king  
 His three broad sons; with now a wan-  
 dering hand  
 And now a pointed finger, told them all:  
 A common light of smiles at our dis-  
 guise  
 Broke from their lips, and, ere the windy  
 jest  
 Had labour'd down within his ample  
 lungs,  
 The genial giant, Arac, roll'd himself  
 Thrice in the saddle, then burst out in  
 words.

'Our land invaded, 'sdeath! and he  
 himself  
 Your captive, yet my father wills not  
 war:  
 And, 'sdeath! myself, what care I, war  
 or no?  
 But then this question of your troth re-  
 mains:  
 And there's a downright honest meaning  
 in her;  
 She flies too high, she flies too high!  
 and yet  
 She ask'd but space and fairplay for her  
 scheme;  
 She prest and prest it on me—I myself,  
 What know I of these things? but, life  
 and soul!  
 I thought her half-right talking of her  
 wrongs;  
 I say she flies too high, 'sdeath! what of  
 that?  
 I take her for the flower of woman-  
 kind,  
 And so I often told her, right or wrong,  
 And, Prince, she can be sweet to those  
 she loves,  
 And, right or wrong, I care not: this is  
 all,  
 I stand upon her side: she made me  
 swear it—  
 'Sdeath—and with solemn rites by  
 candle-light—  
 Swear by St. something—I forget her  
 name—  
 Her that talk'd down the fifty wisest  
 men;  
 She was a princess too; and so I swore.

Come, this is all; she will not: waive  
 your claim:  
 If not, the foughten field, what else, at  
 once  
 Decides it, 'sdeath! against my father's  
 will.'

I lagg'd in answer, loth to render up  
 My precontract, and loth by brainless  
 war  
 To cleave the rift of difference deeper  
 yet;  
 Till one of those two brothers, half aside  
 And fingering at the hair about his lip,  
 To prick us on to combat 'Like to like!  
 The woman's garment hid the woman's  
 heart.'  
 A taunt that clench'd his purpose like a  
 blow!  
 For fiery-short was Cyril's counter-scoff,  
 And sharp I answer'd, touch'd upon the  
 point  
 Where idle boys are cowards to their  
 shame,  
 'Decide it here: why not? we are three  
 to three.'

Then spake the third, 'But three to  
 three? no more?  
 No more, and in our noble sister's cause?  
 More, more, for honour: every captain  
 waits  
 Hungry for honour, angry for his king.  
 More, more, some fifty on a side, that  
 each  
 May breathe himself, and quick! by  
 overthrow  
 Of these or those, the question settled die.'

'Yea,' answer'd I, 'for this wild  
 wreath of air,  
 This flake of rainbow flying on the  
 highest  
 Foam of men's deeds—this honour, if  
 ye will.  
 It needs must be for honour if at all:  
 Since, what decision? if we fail, we fail,  
 And if we win, we fail: she would not  
 keep  
 Her compact.' 'Sdeath! but we will  
 send to her,'  
 Said Arac, 'worthy reasons why she  
 should

Bide by this issue: let our missive thro',  
And you shall have her answer by the  
word.'

'Boys!' shriek'd the old king, but  
vainlier than a hen  
To her false daughters in the pool; for  
none  
Regarded; neither seem'd there more to  
say:  
Back rode we to my father's camp, and  
found  
He thrice had sent a herald to the gates,  
To learn if Ida yet would cede our claim,  
Or by denial flush her babbling wells  
With her own people's life: three times  
he went:  
The first, he blew and blew, but none  
appear'd:  
He batter'd at the doors; none came: the  
next,  
An awful voice within had warn'd him  
thence:  
The third, and those eight daughters of  
the plough  
Came sallying thro' the gates, and  
caught his hair,  
And so belabour'd him on rib and cheek  
They made him wild: not less one glance  
he caught  
Thro' open doors of Ida station'd there  
Unshaken, clinging to her purpose, firm  
Tho' compass'd by two armies and the  
noise  
Of arms; and standing like a stately Pine  
Set in a cataract on an island-crag,  
When storm is on the heights, and right  
and left  
Suck'd from the dark heart of the long  
hills roll  
The torrents, dash'd to the vale: and yet  
her will  
Bred will in me to overcome it or fall.

But when I told the king that I was  
pledged  
To fight in tourney for my bride, he  
clash'd  
His iron palms together with a cry;  
Himself would tilt it out among the lads:  
But overborne by all his bearded lords  
With reasons drawn from age and state,  
perforce

He yielded, wroth and red, with fierce  
demur:

And many a bold knight started up in heat,  
And sware to combat for my claim till  
death.

All on this side the palace ran the field  
Flat to the garden-wall: and likewise  
here,

Above the garden's glowing blossom-belts,  
A column'd entry shone and marble stairs,  
And great bronze valves, emboss'd with  
Tomyris

And what she did to Cyrus after fight,  
But now fast barr'd: so here upon the flat  
All that long morn the lists were hammer'd  
up,

And all that morn the heralds to and fro,  
With message and defiance, went and  
came;

East, Ida's answer, in a royal hand,  
But shaken here and there, and rolling  
words

Oration-like. I kiss'd it and I read.

'O brother, you have known the pangs  
we felt,

What heats of indignation when we heard  
Of those that iron-cramp'd their women's  
feet;

Of lands in which at the altar the poor  
bride

Gives her harsh groom for bridal-gift a  
scourge;

Of living hearts that crack within the fire  
Where smoulder their dead despot; and  
of those,—

Mothers,— that, all prophetic pity, fling  
Their pretty maids in the running flood,  
and swoops

The vulture, beak and talon, at the heart  
Made for all noble motion: and I saw  
That equal baseness lived in sleeker times  
With smoother men: the old leaven  
leaven'd all:

Millions of throats would bawl for civil  
rights,

No woman named: therefore I set my  
face

Against all men, and lived but for mine  
own.

Far off from men I built a fold for them:  
I stored it full of rich memorial:

I fenced it round with gallant institutes,  
 And biting laws to scare the beasts of prey  
 And prosper'd; till a rout of saucy boys  
 Brake on us at our books, and marr'd  
 our peace,  
 Mask'd like our maids, blustering I know  
 not what  
 Of insolence and love, some pretext held  
 Of baby troth, invalid, since my will  
 Seal'd not the bond — the striplings! — for  
 their sport! —  
 I tamed my leopards: shall I not tame  
 these?  
 Or you? or I? for since you think me  
 touch'd  
 In honour — what, I would not aught of  
 false —  
 Is not our cause pure? and whereas I  
 know  
 Your prowess, Arac, and what mother's  
 blood  
 You draw from, fight; you failing, I abide  
 What end soever: fail you will not. Still  
 Take not his life: he risk'd it for my own;  
 His mother lives: yet whatsoe'er you do,  
 Fight and fight well; strike and strike  
 home. O dear  
 Brothers, the woman's Angel guards you,  
 you  
 The sole men to be mingled with our  
 cause,  
 The sole men we shall prize in the after-  
 time,  
 Your very armour hallow'd, and your  
 statues  
 Rear'd, sung to, when, this gad-fly brush'd  
 aside,  
 We plant a solid foot into the Time,  
 And mould a generation strong to move  
 With claim on claim from right to right,  
 till she  
 Whose name is yoked with children's,  
 know herself;  
 And Knowledge in our own land make  
 her free,  
 And, ever following those two crowned  
 twins,  
 Commerce and conquest, shower the fiery  
 grain  
 Of freedom broadcast over all that orbs  
 Between the Northern and the Southern  
 morn.'

Then came a postscript dash'd across  
 the rest.  
 'See that there be no traitors in your  
 camp:  
 We seem a nest of traitors — none to trust  
 Since our arms fail'd — this Egypt-plague  
 of men!  
 Almost our maids were better at their  
 homes,  
 Than thus man-girdled here: indeed I  
 think  
 Our chiefest comfort is the little child  
 Of one unworthy mother; which she left:  
 She shall not have it back: the child  
 shall grow  
 To prize the authentic mother of her mind.  
 I took it for an hour in mine own bed  
 This morning: there the tender orphan  
 hands  
 Felt at my heart, and seem'd to charm  
 from thence  
 The wrath I nursed against the world:  
 farewell.'

I ceased; he said, 'Stubborn, but she  
 may sit  
 Upon a king's right hand in thunder-  
 storms,  
 And breed up warriors! See now, tho'  
 yourself  
 Be dazzled by the wildfire Love to sloughs  
 That swallow common sense, the spin-  
 dling king,  
 This Gama swamp'd in lazy tolerance.  
 When the man wants weight, the woman  
 takes it up,  
 And topples down the scales; but this is  
 fixt  
 As are the roots of earth and base of all;  
 Man for the field and woman for the  
 hearth:  
 Man for the sword and for the needle  
 she:  
 Man with the head and woman with the  
 heart:  
 Man to command and woman to obey;  
 All else confusion. Look you! the gray  
 mare  
 Is ill to live with, when her whinny shrills  
 From tile to scullery, and her small good-  
 man  
 Shrinks in his arm-chair while the fires  
 of Hell

Mix with his hearth: but you — she's yet  
a colt —

Take, break her: strongly groom'd and  
straitly curb'd

She might not rank with those detestable  
That let the hantling scald at home, and  
brawl

Their rights or wrongs like pötherbs in  
the street.

They say she's comely; there's the fairer  
chance:

I like her none the less for rating at her!  
Besides, the woman wed is not as we,  
But suffers change of frame. A lusty brace  
Of twins may weed her of her folly. Boy,  
The bearing and the training of a child  
Is woman's wisdom.'

Thus the hard old king:

I took my leave, for it was nearly noon:  
I pored upon her letter which I held,  
And on the little clause 'take not his  
life:'

I mused on that wild morning in the  
woods,

And on the 'Follow, follow, thou shalt  
win:'

I thought on all the wrathful king had  
said,

And how the strange betrothment was to  
end:

Then I remember'd that burnt sorcerer's  
curse

That one should fight with shadows and  
should fall;

And like a flash the weird affection  
came:

King, camp and college turn'd to hollow  
shöws;

I seem'd to move in old memorial tilts,  
And doing battle with forgotten ghosts,  
To dream myself the shadow of a dream:  
And ere I woke it was the point of noon,  
The lists were ready. Empanoplied and  
plumed

We enter'd in, and waited, fifty there  
Opposed to fifty, till the trumpet blared  
At the barrier like a wild horn in a land  
Of echoes, and a moment, and once  
more

The trumpet, and again: at which the  
storm

Of galloping hoofs bare on the ridge of  
spears

And riders front to front, until they  
closed

In conflict with the crash of shivering  
points,

And thunder. Yet it seem'd a dream,  
I dream'd

Of fighting. On his haunches rose the  
steed,

And into fiery splinters leapt the lance,  
And out of stricken helmets sprang the  
fire.

Part sat like rocks: part reel'd but kept  
their seats:

Part roll'd on the earth and rose again  
and drew:

Part stumbled mixt with floundering  
horses. Down

From those two bulks at Arac's side, and  
down

From Arac's arm, as from a giant's flail,  
The large blows rain'd, as here and  
everywhere

He rode the mellay, lord of the ringing  
lists,

And all the plain, — brand, mace, and  
shaft, and shield, —

Shock'd, like an iron-clanging anvil  
bang'd

With hammers; till I thought, can this  
be he

From Gama's dwarfish loins? if this be so,  
The mother makes us most — and in my  
dream

I glanced aside, and saw the palace-front  
Alive with fluttering scarfs and ladies'  
eyes,

And highest, among the statues, statue-  
like,

Between a cymbal'd Miriam and a Jael,  
With Psyche's babe, was Ida watching us,  
A single band of gold about her hair,  
Like a Saint's glory up in heaven: but she  
No saint — inexorable — no tenderness —  
Too hard, too cruel: yet she sees me  
fight,

Yea, let her see me fall! with that I  
drave

Among the thickest and bore down a  
Prince,

And Cyril, one. Yea, let me make my  
dream

All that I would. But that large-  
moulded man,



His visage all agrin as at a wake,  
 Made at me thro' the press, and, staggering  
 back  
 With stroke on stroke the horse and  
 horseman, came  
 As comes a pillar of electric cloud,  
 Flaying the roofs and sucking up the drains,  
 And shadowing down the champaign till  
 it strikes  
 On a wood, and takes, and breaks, and  
 cracks, and splits,  
 And twists the grain with such a roar  
 that Earth  
 Reels, and the herdsmen cry; for every-  
 thing  
 Gave way before him: only Florian, he  
 That loved me closer than his own right  
 eye,  
 Thrust in between; but Arac rode him  
 down:  
 And Cyril seeing it, push'd against the  
 Prince,  
 With Psyche's colour round his helmet,  
 tough,  
 Strong, supple, sinew-corded, apt at arms;  
 But tougher, heavier, stronger, he that  
 smote  
 And threw him: last I spurr'd; I felt my  
 veins  
 Stretch with fierce heat; a moment hand  
 to hand,  
 And sword to sword, and horse to horse  
 we hung,  
 Till I struck out and shouted; the blade  
 glanced,  
 I did but shear a feather, and dream and  
 truth  
 Flow'd from me; darkness closed me;  
 and I fell.

## VI.

Home they brought her warrior dead:  
 She nor swoon'd, nor utter'd cry:  
 All her maidens, watching, said,  
 'She must weep or she will die.'

Then they praised him, soft and low,  
 Call'd him worthy to be loved,  
 Truest friend and noblest foe;  
 Yet she neither spoke nor moved.

Stole a maiden from her place,  
 Lightly to the warrior stept,  
 Took the face-cloth from the face;  
 Yet she neither moved nor wept.

Rose a nurse of ninety years,  
 Set his child upon her knee—  
 Like summer tempest came her tears—  
 'Sweet my child, I live for thee.'

My dream had never died or lived again.  
 As in some mystic middle state I lay;  
 Seeing I saw not, hearing not I heard:  
 Tho', if I saw not, yet they told me all  
 So often that I speak as having seen.

For so it seem'd, or so they said to me,  
 That all things grew more tragic and  
 more strange;  
 That when our side was vanquish'd and  
 my cause  
 For ever lost, there went up a great cry,  
 The Prince is slain. My father heard  
 and ran  
 In on the lists, and there unlaced my  
 casque  
 And grovell'd on my body, and after him  
 Came Psyche, sorrowing for Aglaia.

But high upon the palace Ida stood  
 With Psyche's babe in arm: there on  
 the roofs  
 Like that great dame of Lapidoth she  
 sang.

'Our enemies have fall'n, have fall'n: the seed,  
 The little seed they laugh'd at in the dark,  
 Has risen and cleft the soil, and grown a bulk  
 Of spanless girth, that lays on every side  
 A thousand arms and rushes to the Sun.

'Our enemies have fall'n, have fall'n: they  
 came;  
 The leaves were wet with women's tears: they  
 heard  
 The noise of songs they would not understand:  
 They mark'd it with the red cross to the fall,  
 And would have strown it, and are fall'n them-  
 selves.

'Our enemies have fall'n, have fall'n: they  
 came,  
 The woodmen with their axes: lo the tree!  
 But we will make it faggots for the hearth,  
 And shape it plank and beam for roof and floor,  
 And boats and bridges for the use of men.

'Our enemies have fall'n, have fall'n: they  
 struck;  
 With their own blows they hurt themselves, nor  
 knew

There dwelt an iron nature in the grain :  
The glittering axe was broken in their arms,  
Their arms were shattered to the shoulder blade.

'Our enemies have fall'n, but this shall grow  
A night of Summer from the heat, a breadth  
Of Autumn, dropping fruits of power: and roll'd  
With music in the growing breeze of Time,  
The tops shall strike from star to star, the fangs  
Shall move the stony bases of the world.

'And now, O maids, behold our  
sanctuary  
Is violate, our laws broken: fear we not  
To break them more in their behoof,  
whose arms  
Champion'd our cause and won it with a  
day  
Blanch'd in our annals, and perpetual feast,  
When dames and heroines of the golden  
year  
Shall strip a hundred hollows bare of  
Spring,  
To rain an April of ovation round  
Their statues, borne aloft, the three: but  
come,  
We will be liberal, since our rights are  
won.  
Let them not lie in the tents with coarse  
mankind,  
Ill nurses; but descend, and proffer these  
The brethren of our blood and cause, that  
there  
Lie bruised and maim'd, the tender  
ministries  
Of female hands and hospitality.'

She spoke, and with the babe yet in  
her arms,  
Descending, burst the great bronze valves,  
and led  
A hundred maids in train across the Park.  
Some cowl'd, and some bare-headed, on  
they came,  
Their feet in flowers, her loveliest: by  
them went  
The enamour'd air sighing, and on their  
curls  
From the high tree the blossom wavering  
fell,  
And over them the tremulous isles of light  
Slided, they moving under shade: but  
Blanche  
At distance follow'd: so they came: anon

Thro' open field into the lists they wound  
Timorously; and as the leader of the  
herd  
That holds a stately fretwork to the  
Sun,  
And follow'd up by a hundred airy does,  
Steps with a tender foot, light as on air,  
The lovely, lordly creature floated on  
To where her wounded brethren lay;  
there stay'd;  
Knelt on one knee, — the child on one, —  
and prest  
Their hands, and call'd them dear de-  
liverers,  
And happy warriors, and immortal names,  
And said: 'You shall not lie in the tents  
but here,  
And nursed by those for whom you  
fought, and served  
With female hands and hospitality.'

Then, whether moved by this, or was  
it chance,  
She past my way. Up started from my  
side  
The old lion, glaring with his whelpless  
eye,  
Silent; but when she saw me lying stark,  
Dishelm'd and mute, and motionlessly  
pale,  
Cold ev'n to her, she sigh'd; and when  
she saw  
The haggard father's face and reverend  
beard  
Of grisly twine, all dabbled with the blood  
Of his own son, shudder'd, a twitch of  
pain  
Tortured her mouth, and o'er her fore-  
head past  
A shadow, and her hue changed, and she  
said:  
'He saved my life: my brother slew him  
for it.'  
No more: at which the king in bitter  
scorn  
Drew from my neck the painting and the  
tress,  
And held them up: she saw them, and a  
day  
Rose from the distance on her memory,  
When the good Queen, her mother, shore  
the tress  
With kisses, ere the days of Lady Blanche:

And then once more she look'd at my  
pale face :

Till understanding all the foolish work  
Of Fancy, and the bitter close of all,  
Her iron will was broken in her mind;  
Her noble heart was molten in her breast;  
She bow'd, she set the child on the earth;  
she laid

A feeling finger on my brows, and pres-  
ently

'O Sire,' she said, 'he lives: he is not  
dead :

O let me have him with my brethren here  
In our own palace: we will tend on him  
Like one of these; if so, by any means,  
To lighten this great clog of thanks, that  
make

Our progress falter to the woman's goal.'

She said: but at the happy word 'he  
lives,'

My father stoop'd, re-father'd o'er my  
wounds.

So those two foes above my fallen life,  
With brow to brow like night and evening  
mixt

Their dark and gray, while Psyche ever  
stole

A little nearer, till the babe that by us,  
Half-lapt in glowing gauze and golden  
brede,

Lay like a new-fall'n meteor on the grass,  
Uncared for, spied its mother and began  
A blind and babbling laughter, and to  
dance

Its body, and reach its fatling innocent  
arms

And lazy lingering fingers. She the appeal  
Brook'd not, but clamouring out 'Mine —  
mine — not yours,

It is not yours, but mine: give me the  
child,'

Ceased all on tremble: piteous was the  
cry :

So stood the unhappy mother open-  
mouth'd,

And turn'd each face her way: wan was  
her cheek

With hollow watch, her blooming mantle  
torn,

Red grief and mother's hunger in her eye,  
And down dead-heavy sank her curls, and  
half

The sacred mother's bosom, panting, burst  
The laces toward her babe; but she nor  
cared

Nor knew it, clamouring on, till Ida heard,  
Look'd up, and rising slowly from me,  
stood

Erect and silent, striking with her glance  
The mother, me, the child; but he that  
lay

Beside us, Cyril, batter'd as he was,  
Trail'd himself up on one knee: then he  
drew

Her robe to meet his lips, and down she  
look'd

At the arm'd man sideways, pitying as it  
seem'd,

Or self-involved; but when she learnt his  
face,

Remembering his ill-omen'd song, arose  
Once more thro' all her height, and o'er  
him grew

Tall as a figure lengthen'd on the sand  
When the tide ebbs in sunshine, and he  
said :

'O fair and strong and terrible!  
Lioness

That with your long locks play the Lion's  
mane!

But Love and Nature, these are two more  
terrible

And stronger. See, your foot is on our  
necks,

We vanquish'd, you the Victor of your  
will.

What would you more? give her the  
child! remain

Orb'd in your isolation: he is dead,  
Or all as dead: henceforth we let you be:  
Win you the hearts of women; and  
beware

Lest, where you seek the common love  
of these,

The common hate with the revolving  
wheel

Should drag you down, and some great  
Nemesis

Break from a darken'd future, crown'd  
with fire,

And tread you out for ever: but how-  
soe'er

Fix'd in yourself, never in your own arms  
To hold your own, deny not hers to her,

Give her the child! O if, I say, you keep  
 One pulse that beats true woman, if you  
     loved  
 The breast that fed or arm that dandled  
     you,  
 Or own one port of sense not flint to  
     prayer,  
 Give her the child! or if you scorn to  
     lay it,  
 Yourself, in hands so lately claspt with  
     yours,  
 Or speak to her, your dearest, her one  
     fault  
 The tenderness, not yours, that could not  
     kill,  
 Give *me* it: *I* will give it her.'

He said:

At first her eye with slow dilation roll'd  
 Dry flame, she listening; after sank and  
     sank  
 And, into mournful twilight mellowing,  
     dwelt  
 Full on the child; she took it: 'Pretty  
     bud!  
 Lily of the vale! half open'd bell of the  
     woods!  
 Sole comfort of my dark hour, when a  
     world  
 Of traitorous friend and broken system  
     made  
 No purple in the distance, mystery,  
 Pledge of a love not to be mine, farewell;  
 These men are hard upon us as of old,  
 We two must part: and yet how fain  
     was I  
 To dream thy cause embraced in mine,  
     to think  
 I might be something to thee, when I  
     felt  
 Thy helpless warmth about my barren  
     breast  
 In the dead prime: but may thy mother  
     prove  
 As true to thee as false, false, false to me!  
 And, if thou needs must bear the yoke,  
     I wish it  
 Gentle as freedom' — here she kiss'd it:  
     then —  
 'All good go with thee! take it, Sir,' and so  
 Laid the soft babe in his hard-mailed  
     hands,  
 Who turn'd half-round to Psyche as she  
     sprang

To meet it, with an eye that swum in  
     thanks;  
 Then felt it sound and whole from head  
     to foot,  
 And hugg'd and never hugg'd it close  
     enough,  
 And in her hunger mouth'd and mum-  
     bled it,  
 And hid her bosom with it; after that  
 Put on more calm and added suppliantly:

'We two were friends: I go to mine  
     own land  
 For ever: find some other: as for me  
 I scarce am fit for your great plans: yet  
     speak to me,  
 Say one soft word and let me part for-  
     given.'

But Ida spoke not, rapt upon the child.  
 Then Arac. 'Ida — 'sdeath! you blame  
     the man;  
 You wrong yourselves — the woman is so  
     hard  
 Upon the woman. Come, a grace to me!  
 I am your warrior: I and mine have  
     fought  
 Your battle: kiss her; take her hand, she  
     weeps:  
 'Sdeath! I would sooner fight thrice o'er  
     than see it.'

But Ida spoke not, gazing on the  
     ground;  
 And reddening in the furrows of his chin,  
 And moved beyond his custom, Gama  
     said:

'I've heard that there is iron in the  
     blood,  
 And I believe it. Not one word? not  
     one?  
 Whence drew you this steel temper? not  
     from me,  
 Not from your mother, now a saint with  
     saints.  
 She said you had a heart — I heard her  
     say it —  
 "Our Ida has a heart" — just ere she  
     died —  
 "But see that some one with authority  
 Be near her still" and I — I sought for  
     one —

All people said she had authority —  
The Lady Blanche: much profit! Not  
one word;

No! tho' your father sues: see how you  
stand

Stiff as Lot's wife, and all the good knights  
maim'd,

I trust that there is no one hurt to death,  
For your wild whim: and was it then for  
this,

Was it for this we gave our palace up,  
Where we withdrew from summer heats  
and state,

And had our wine and chess beneath the  
planes,

And many a pleasant hour with her that's  
gone,

Ere you were born to vex us? Is it kind?  
Speak to her I say: is this not she of  
whom,

When first she came, all flush'd you said  
to me

Now had you got a friend of your own  
age,

Now could you share your thought; now  
should men see

Two women faster welded in one love  
Than pairs of wedlock; she you walk'd  
with, she

You talk'd with, whole nights long, up in  
the tower,

Of sine and arc, spheroid and azimuth,  
And right ascension, Heaven knows what;  
and now

A word, but one, one little kindly word,  
Not one to spare her: out upon you,  
flint!

You love nor her, nor me, nor any; nay,  
You shame your mother's judgment too.

Not one?

You will not? well — no heart have you,  
or such

As fancies like the vermin in a nut  
Have fretted all to dust and bitterness.'

So said the small king moved beyond his  
wont.

But Ida stood nor spoke, drain'd of  
her force

By many a varying influence and so long.  
Down thro' her limbs a drooping languor  
wept:

Her head a little bent; and on her mouth

A doubtful smile dwelt like a clouded  
moon

In a still water: then brake out my sire,  
Lifting his grim head from my wounds.  
'O you,

Woman, whom we thought woman even  
now,

And were half fool'd to let you tend our  
son,

Because he might have wish'd it — but  
we see

The accomplice of your madness unfor-  
given,

And think that you might mix his draught  
with death,

When your skies change again: the  
rougher hand

Is safer: on to the tents: take up the  
Prince.'

He rose, and while each ear was prick'd  
to attend

A tempest, thro' the cloud that dimm'd  
her broke

A genial warmth and light once more,  
and shone

Thro' glittering drops on her sad friend.  
'Come hither.

O Psyche,' she cried out, 'embrace me,  
come,

Quick while I melt; make reconciliation  
sure

With one that cannot keep her mind an  
hour:

Come to the hollow heart they slander so!  
Kiss and be friends, like children being  
chid!

I seem no more: I want forgiveness too:  
I should have had to do with none but

maids,  
That have no links with men. Ah false  
but dear,

Dear traitor, too much loved, why? —  
why? — Yet see,

Before these kings we embrace you yet  
once more

With all forgiveness, all oblivion,  
And trust, not love, you less.

And now, O sire.

Grant me your son, to nurse, to wait  
upon him,

Like mine own brother. For my debt  
to him,

This nightmare weight of gratitude, I  
 know it;  
 Taunt me no more: yourself and yours  
 shall have  
 Free adit; we will scatter all our maids  
 Till happier times each to her proper  
 hearth:  
 What use to keep them here—now?  
 grant my prayer.  
 Help, father, brother, help; speak to  
 the king:  
 Thaw this male nature to some touch  
 of that  
 Which kills me with myself, and drags  
 me down  
 From my fixt height to mob me up with all  
 The soft and milky rabble of womankind,  
 Poor weakling ev'n as they are.  
 Passionate tears  
 Follow'd: the king replied not: Cyril  
 said:  
 'Your brother, Lady, — Florian, — ask  
 for him  
 Of your great Head — for he is wounded  
 too —  
 That you may tend upon him with the  
 prince.'  
 'Ay so,' said Ida with a bitter smile,  
 'Our laws are broken: let him enter too.'  
 Then Violet, she that sang the mournful  
 song,  
 And had a cousin tumbled on the plain,  
 Petition'd too for him. 'Ay so,' she said,  
 'I stagger in the stream: I cannot keep  
 My heart an eddy from the brawling  
 hour:  
 We break our laws with ease, but let  
 it be.'  
 'Ay so?' said Blanche: 'Amazed am I  
 to hear  
 Your Highness: but your Highness  
 breaks with ease  
 The law your Highness did not make:  
 'twas I.  
 I had been wedded wife, I knew man-  
 kind,  
 And block'd them out; but these men  
 came to woo  
 Your Highness — verily I think to win.'

So she, and turn'd askance a wintry  
 eye:  
 But Ida with a voice, that like a bell

Toll'd by an earthquake in a trembling  
 tower,  
 Rang ruin, answer'd full of grief and  
 scorn.

'Fling our doors wide! all, all, not  
 one, but all,  
 Not only he, but by my mother's soul,  
 Whatever man lies wounded, friend or  
 foe,  
 Shall enter, if he will. Let our girls flit,  
 Till the storm die! but had you stood  
 by us,  
 The roar that breaks the Pharos from  
 his base  
 Had left us rock. She fain would sting  
 us too,  
 But shall not. Pass, and mingle with  
 your likes.  
 We brook no further insult but are gone.'

She turn'd; the very nape of her white  
 neck  
 Was rosed with indignation: but the  
 Prince  
 Her brother came; the king her father  
 charm'd  
 Her wounded soul with words: nor did  
 mine own  
 Refuse her proffer, lastly gave his hand.

Then us they lifted up, dead weights,  
 and bare  
 Straight to the doors: to them the doors  
 gave way  
 Groaning, and in the Vestal entry shriek'd  
 The virgin marble under iron heels:  
 And on they moved and gain'd the hall,  
 and there  
 Rested: but great the crush was, and  
 each base,  
 To left and right, of those tall columns  
 drown'd  
 In silken fluctuation and the swarm  
 Of female whisperers: at the further end  
 Was Ida by the throne, the two great  
 cats  
 Close by her, like supporters on a shield,  
 Bow-back'd with fear: but in the centre  
 stood  
 The common men with rolling eyes;  
 amazed  
 They glared upon the women, and aghast



The women stared at these, all silent,  
save

When armour clash'd or jingled, while  
the day,

Descending, struck athwart the hall, and  
shot

A flying splendour out of brass and steel,  
That o'er the statues leapt from head  
to head,

Now fired an angry Pallas on the helm,  
Now set a wrathful Dian's moon on flame,  
And now and then an echo started up,  
And shuddering fled from room to room,  
and died

Of fright in far apartments.

Then the voice

Of Ida sounded, issuing ordinance :

And me they bore up the broad stairs,  
and thro'

The long-laid galleries past a hundred  
doors

To one deep chamber shut from sound,  
and due

To languid limbs and sickness; left me  
in it;

And others otherwhere they laid; and all  
That afternoon a sound arose of hoof

And chariot, many a maiden passing  
home

Till happier times; but some were left  
of those

Held sagest, and the great lords out and  
in,

From those two hosts that lay beside  
the walls,

Walk'd at their will, and everything was  
changed.

## VII.

Ask me no more: the moon may draw the sea;

The cloud may stoop from heaven and take  
the shape

With fold to fold, of mountain or of cape;

But O too fond, when have I answer'd thee?

Ask me no more.

Ask me no more: what answer should I give?

I love not hollow cheek or faded eye:

Yet, O my friend, I will not have thee die!

Ask me no more, lest I should bid thee live;

Ask me no more.

Ask me no more: thy fate and mine are seal'd:

I strove against the stream and all in vain:

Let the great river take me to the main:

No more, dear love, for at a touch I yield;

Ask me no more.

So was their sanctuary violated,  
So their fair college turn'd to hospital;  
At first with all confusion: by and by  
Sweet order lived again with other laws:  
A kindlier influence reign'd; and every-  
where

Low voices with the ministering hand  
Hung round the sick: the maidens came,  
they talk'd,

They sang, they read: till she not fair  
began

To gather light, and she that was, be-  
came

Her former beauty treble; and to and fro  
With books, with flowers, with Angel  
offices,

Like creatures native unto gracious act,  
And in their own clear element, they  
moved.

But sadness on the soul of Ida fell,  
And hatred of her weakness, blent with  
shame.

Old studies fail'd; seldom she spoke:  
but oft

Clomb to the roofs, and gazed alone for  
hours

On that disastrous leaguer, swarms of men  
Darkening her female field: void was  
her use,

And she as one that climbs a peak to gaze  
O'er land and main, and sees a great  
black cloud

Drag inward from the deeps, a wall of  
night,

Blot out the slope of sea from verge to  
shore,

And suck the blinding splendour from  
the sand,

And quenching lake by lake and tarn  
by tarn

Expunge the world: so fared she gazing  
there;

So blacken'd all her world in secret,  
blank

And waste it seem'd and vain; till down  
she came,

And found fair peace once more among  
the sick.

And twilight dawn'd; and morn by  
 morn the lark  
 Shot up and shrill'd in flickering gyres,  
 but I  
 Lay silent in the muffled cage of life:  
 And twilight gloom'd; and broader-grown  
 the bowers  
 Drew the great night into themselves,  
 and Heaven,  
 Star after star, arose and fell; but I,  
 Deeper than those weird doubts could  
 reach me, lay  
 Quite sunder'd from the moving Universe,  
 Nor knew what eye was on me, nor the  
 hand  
 That nursed me, more than infants in  
 their sleep.

But Psyche tended Florian: with her  
 oft,  
 Melissa came; for Blanche had gone, but  
 left  
 Her child among us, willing she should  
 keep  
 Court-favour: here and there the small  
 bright head,  
 A light of healing, glanced about the  
 couch,  
 Or thro' the parted silks the tender face  
 Peep'd, shining in upon the wounded man  
 With blush and smile, a medicine in  
 themselves  
 To wile the length from languorous hours,  
 and draw  
 The sting from pain; nor seem'd it strange  
 that soon  
 He rose up whole, and those fair charities  
 Join'd at her side; nor stranger seem'd  
 that hearts  
 So gentle, so employ'd, should close in  
 love,  
 Than when two dewdrops on the petal  
 shake  
 To the same sweet air, and tremble deeper  
 down,  
 And slip at once all-fragrant into one.

Less prosperously the second suit ob-  
 tain'd  
 At first with Psyche. Not tho' Blanche  
 had sworn  
 That after that dark night among the  
 fields

She needs must wed him for her own  
 good name;  
 Not tho' he built upon the habe restored;  
 Nor tho' she liked him, yielded she, but  
 fear'd  
 To incense the Head once more; till on  
 a day  
 When Cyril pleaded, Ida came behind  
 Seen but of Psyche: on her foot she hung  
 A moment, and she heard, at which her  
 face  
 A little flush'd, and she past on; but each  
 Assumed from thence a half-consent in-  
 volved  
 In stillness, plighted troth, and were at  
 peace.

Nor only these: Love in the sacred  
 halls  
 Held carnival at will, and flying struck  
 With showers of random sweet on maid  
 and man.  
 Nor did her father cease to press my claim,  
 Nor did mine own, now reconciled; nor  
 yet  
 Did those twin brothers, risen again and  
 whole;  
 Nor Arac, satiate with his victory.

But I lay still, and with me oft she sat:  
 Then came a change; for sometimes I  
 would catch  
 Her hand in wild delirium, gripe it hard,  
 And fling it like a viper off, and shriek  
 'You are not Ida;' clasp it once again,  
 And call her Ida, tho' I knew her not,  
 And call her sweet, as if in irony,  
 And call her hard and cold which seem'd  
 a truth:  
 And still she fear'd that I should lose my  
 mind,  
 And often she believed that I should die:  
 Till out of long frustration of her care,  
 And pensive tendance in the all-weary  
 noons,  
 And watches in the dead, the dark, when  
 clocks  
 Throbb'd thunder thro' the palace floors,  
 or call'd  
 On flying Time from all their silver  
 tongues—  
 And out of memories of her kindlier days,  
 And sidelong glances at my father's grief,

And at the happy lovers heart in heart —  
 And out of hauntings of my spoken love,  
 And lonely listenings to my mutter'd  
 dream,  
 And often feeling of the helpless hands,  
 And wordless broodings on the wasted  
 cheek —  
 From all a closer interest flourish'd up,  
 Tenderness touch by touch, and last, to  
 these,  
 Love, like an Alpine harebell hung with  
 tears  
 By some cold morning glacier; frail at  
 first  
 And feeble, all unconscious of itself,  
 But such as gather'd colour day by day.

Last I woke sane, but well-nigh close  
 to death  
 For weakness: it was evening: silent  
 light  
 Slept on the painted walls, wherein were  
 wrought  
 Two grand designs; for on one side arose  
 The women up in wild revolt, and storm'd  
 At the Oppian law. Titanic shapes, they  
 cramm'd  
 The forum, and half-crush'd among the  
 rest  
 A dwarf-like Cato cower'd. On the other  
 side  
 Hortensia spoke against the tax; behind,  
 A train of dames: by axe and eagle sat,  
 With all their foreheads drawn in Roman  
 scowls,  
 And half the wolf's-milk curdled in their  
 veins,  
 The fierce triumvirs; and before them  
 paused  
 Hortensia pleading: angry was her face.

I saw the forms: I knew not where I  
 was:  
 They did but look like hollow shows;  
 nor more  
 Sweet Ida: palm to palm she sat: the  
 dew  
 Dwelt in her eyes, and softer all her shape  
 And rounder seem'd: I moved: I sigh'd:  
 a touch  
 Came round my wrist, and tears upon my  
 hand:  
 Then all for languor and self-pity ran

Mine down my face, and with what life I  
 had,  
 And like a flower that cannot all unfold,  
 So drench'd it is with tempest, to the sun,  
 Yet, as it may, turns toward him, I on her  
 Fixt my faint eyes, and utter'd whisper-  
 ingly:

'If you be, what I think you, some  
 sweet dream,  
 I would but ask you to fulfil yourself:  
 But if you be that Ida whom I knew,  
 I ask you nothing: only, if a dream,  
 Sweet dream, be perfect. I shall die  
 to-night.  
 Stoop down and seem to kiss me ere I die.'

I could no more, but lay like one in  
 trance,  
 That hears his burial talk'd of by his  
 friends,  
 And cannot speak, nor move, nor make  
 one sign,  
 But lies and dreads his doom. She turn'd;  
 she paused;  
 She stoop'd; and out of languor leapt a  
 cry;  
 Leapt fiery Passion from the brinks of  
 death;  
 And I believed that in the living world  
 My spirit closed with Ida's at the lips;  
 Till back I fell, and from mine arms she  
 rose  
 Glowing all over noble shame; and all  
 Her falser self slipt from her like a robe,  
 And left her woman, lovelier in her mood  
 Than in her mould that other, when she  
 came  
 From barren deeps to conquer all with  
 love;  
 And down the streaming crystal dropt;  
 and she  
 Far-fleeted by the purple island-sides,  
 Naked, a double light in air and wave,  
 To meet her Graces, where they deck'd  
 her out  
 For worship without end; nor end of mine,  
 Stateliest, for thee! but mute she glided  
 forth,  
 Nor glanced behind her, and I sank and  
 slept,  
 Fill'd thro' and thro' with Love, a happy  
 sleep.

Deep in the night I woke: she, near  
me, held  
A volume of the Poets of her land:  
There to herself, all in low tones, she  
read.

'Now sleeps the crimson petal, now the white;  
Nor waves the cypress in the palace walk;  
Nor winks the gold fin in the porphyry font:  
The fire-fly wakens: waken thou with me.

Now droops the milkwhite peacock like a ghost,  
And like a ghost she glimmers on to me.

Now lies the Earth all Danaë to the stars,  
And all thy heart lies open unto me.

Now slides the silent meteor on, and leaves  
A shining furrow, as thy thoughts in me.

Now folds the lily all her sweetness up,  
And slips into the bosom of the lake:  
So fold thyself, my dearest, thou, and slip  
Into my bosom and be lost in me.'

I heard her turn the page; she found  
a small  
Sweet Idyl, and once more, as low, she  
read:

'Come down, O maid, from yonder mountain  
height:

What pleasure lives in height (the shepherd sang)  
In height and cold, the splendour of the hills?  
But cease to move so near the Heavens, and cease  
To glide a sunbeam by the blasted Pine,  
To sit a star upon the sparkling spire;  
And come, for Love is of the valley, come,  
For Love is of the valley, come thou down  
And find him; by the happy threshold, he,  
Or hand in hand with Plenty in the maize,  
Or red with spiced purple of the vats,  
Or foxlike in the vine; nor cares to walk  
With Death and Morning on the silver horns,  
Nor wilt thou snare him in the white ravine,  
Nor find him dropt upon the firths of ice,  
That huddling slant in furrow-cloven falls  
To roll the torrent out of dusky doors:  
But follow; let the torrent dance thee down  
To find him in the valley; let the wild  
Lean-headed Eagles yelp alone, and leave  
The monstrous ledges there to slope, and spill  
Their thousand wreaths of dangling water-smoke,  
That like a broken purpose waste in air:  
So waste not thou; but come; for all the vales  
Await thee; azure pillars of the hearth  
Arise to thee; the children call, and I

Thy shepherd pipe, and sweet is every sound,  
Sweeter thy voice, but every sound is sweet;  
Myriads of rivulets hurrying thro' the lawn,  
The moan of doves in immemorial elms,  
And murmuring of innumerable bees.'

So she low-toned; while with shut  
eyes I lay  
Listening; then look'd. Pale was the  
perfect face;  
The bosom with long sighs labour'd; and  
meek

Seem'd the full lips, and mild the lumi-  
nous eyes,  
And the voice trembled and the hand.  
She said

Brokenly, that she knew it, she had fail'd  
In sweet humility; had fail'd in all;  
That all her labour was but as a block  
Left in the quarry; but she still were loth,  
She still were loth to yield herself to one  
That wholly scorn'd to help their equal  
rights

Against the sons of men, and barbarous  
laws.

She pray'd me not to judge their cause  
from her

That wrong'd it, sought far less for truth  
than power

In knowledge: something wild within  
her breast,

A greater than all knowledge, beat her  
down.

And she had nursed me there from week  
to week:

Much had she learnt in little time. In  
part

It was ill counsel had misled the girl  
To vex true hearts: yet was she but a  
girl—

'Ah fool, and made myself a Queen of  
farce!

When comes another such? never, I think,  
Till the Sun drop, dead, from the signs.'

Her voice  
Choked, and her forehead sank upon her  
hands,

And her great heart thro' all the faultful  
Past

Went sorrowing in a pause I dared not  
break;

Till notice of a change in the dark world  
Was lispt about the acacias, and a bird,  
That early woke to feed her little ones,

Sent from a dewy breast a cry for light :  
She moved, and at her feet the volume  
fell.

'Blame not thyself too much,' I said,  
'nor blame  
Too much the sons of men and barbarous  
laws;

These were the rough ways of the world  
till now.

Henceforth thou hast a helper, me, that  
know

The woman's cause is man's: they rise  
or sink

Together, dwarf'd or godlike, bond or  
free:

For she that out of Lethe scales with  
man

The shining steps of Nature, shares with  
man

His nights, his days, moves with him to  
one goal,

Stays all the fair young planet in her  
hands —

If she be small, slight-natured, miserable,  
How shall men grow? but work no more  
alone!

Our place is much: as far as in us lies  
We two will serve them both in aiding  
her —

Will clear away the parasitic forms  
That seem to keep her up but drag her  
down —

Will leave her space to burgeon out of  
all

Within her — let her make herself her own  
To give or keep, to live and learn and be

All that not harms distinctive womanhood.  
For woman is not undeveloped man,

But diverse: could we make her as the  
man,

Sweet Love were slain: his dearest bond  
is this,

Not like to like, but like in difference.  
Yet in the long years liker must they grow;

The man be more of woman, she of man;  
He gain in sweetness and in moral height,  
Nor lose the wrestling thews that throw  
the world;

She mental breadth, nor fail in childward  
care,

Nor lose the childlike in the larger mind;  
Till at the last she set herself to man,

Like perfect music unto noble words;  
And so these twain, upon the skirts of  
Time,

Sit side by side, full-summ'd in all their  
powers,

Dispensing harvest, sowing the To-be,  
Self-reverent each and reverencing each,

Distinct in individualities,  
But like each other ev'n as those who love.

Then comes the statelier Eden back to  
men:

Then reign the world's great bridal,  
chaste and calm:

Then springs the crowning race of human-  
kind.

May these things be!'

Sighing she spoke, 'I fear  
They will not.'

'Dear, but let us type them now  
In our own lives, and this proud watch-  
word rest

Of equal; seeing either sex alone  
Is half itself, and in true marriage lies

Nor equal, nor unequal: each fulfils  
Defect in each, and always thought in  
thought,

Purpose in purpose, will in will, they  
grow,

The single pure and perfect animal,  
The two-cell'd heart beating, with one  
full stroke,

Life.'

And again sighing she spoke: 'A  
dream

That once was mine! what woman  
taught you this?'

'Alone,' I said, 'from earlier than I  
know,

Immersed in rich foreshadowings of the  
world,

I loved the woman: he, that doth not,  
lives

A drowning life, besotted in sweet self,  
Or pines in sad experience worse than  
death,

Or keeps his wing'd affections clipt with  
crime:

Yet was there one thro' whom I loved  
her, one

Not learned, save in gracious household  
ways,

Not perfect, nay, but full of tender wants,

No Angel, but a dearer being, all dipt  
 In Angel instincts, breathing Paradise,  
 Interpreter between the Gods and men,  
 Who look'd all native to her place, and  
 yet  
 On tiptoe seem'd to touch upon a sphere  
 Too gross to tread, and all male minds  
 perforce  
 Sway'd to her from their orbits as they  
 moved,  
 And girdled her with music. Happy he  
 With such a mother! faith in woman-  
 kind  
 Beats with his blood, and trust in all  
 things high  
 Comes easy to him, and tho' he trip and  
 fall  
 He shall not blind his soul with clay.'  
 'But I,'  
 Said Ida, tremulously, 'so all unlike—  
 It seems you love to cheat yourself with  
 words:  
 This mother is your model. I have  
 heard  
 Of your strange doubts: they well might  
 be: I seem  
 A mockery to my own self. Never,  
 Prince;  
 You cannot love me.'  
 'Nay but thee,' I said,  
 'From yearlong poring on thy pictured  
 eyes,  
 Ere seen I loved, and loved thee seen,  
 and saw  
 Thee woman thro' the crust of iron  
 moods  
 That mask'd thee from men's reverence  
 up, and forced  
 Sweet love on pranks of saucy boyhood:  
 now,  
 Giv'n back to life, to life indeed, thro'  
 thee,  
 Indeed I love: the new day comes, the  
 light  
 Dearer for night, as dearer thou for faults  
 Lived over: lift thine eyes; my doubts  
 are dead,  
 My haunting sense of hollow shows: the  
 change,  
 This truthful change in thee has kill'd it.  
 Dear,  
 Look up, and let thy nature strike on  
 mine,

Like yonder morning on the blind half-  
 world;  
 Approach and fear not; breathe upon  
 my brows;  
 In that fine air I tremble, all the past  
 Melts mist-like into this bright hour, and  
 this  
 Is morn to more, and all the rich to-  
 come  
 Reels, as the golden Autumn woodland  
 reels  
 Athwart the smoke of burning weeds.  
 Forgive me,  
 I waste my heart in signs: let be. My  
 bride,  
 My wife, my life. O we will walk this  
 world,  
 Yoked in all exercise of noble end,  
 And so thro' those dark gates across the  
 wild  
 That no man knows. Indeed I love  
 thee: come,  
 Yield thyself up: my hopes and thine  
 are one:  
 Accomplish thou my manhood and thy-  
 self;  
 Lay thy sweet hands in mine and trust  
 to me.'

## CONCLUSION.

So closed our tale, of which I give you  
 all  
 The random scheme as wildly as it rose:  
 The words are mostly mine; for when  
 we ceased  
 There came a minute's pause, and Wal-  
 ter said,  
 'I wish she had not yielded!' then to  
 me,  
 'What, if you drest it up poetically!'  
 So pray'd the men, the women: I gave  
 assent:  
 Yet how to bind the scatter'd scheme  
 of seven  
 Together in one sheaf? What style  
 could suit?  
 The men required that I should give  
 throughout  
 The sort of mock-heroic gigantesque,  
 With which we banter'd little Lilia first:  
 The women—and perhaps they felt  
 their power,



For something in the ballads which they sang,  
 Or in their silent influence as they sat,  
 Had ever seem'd to wrestle with burlesque,  
 And drove us, last, to quite a solemn close —  
 They hated banter, wish'd for something real,  
 A gallant fight, a noble princess — why  
 Not make her true-heroic — true-sublime ?  
 Or all, they said, as earnest as the close?  
 Which yet with such a framework scarce could be.  
 Then rose a little feud betwixt the two,  
 Betwixt the mockers and the realists :  
 And I, betwixt them both, to please them both,  
 And yet to give the story as it rose,  
 I moved as in a strange diagonal,  
 And maybe neither pleased myself nor them.

But Lilia pleased me, for she took no part  
 In our dispute: the sequel of the tale  
 Had touch'd her; and she sat, she pluck'd the grass,  
 She flung it from her, thinking: last, she fixt  
 A showery glance upon her aunt, and said,  
 'You — tell us what we are,' who might have told,  
 For she was cramm'd with theories out of books,  
 But that there rose a shout: the gates were closed  
 At sunset, and the crowd were swarming now,  
 To take their leave, about the garden rails.

So I and some went out to these: we climb'd  
 The slope to Vivian-place, and turning saw  
 The happy valleys, half in light, and half  
 Far-shadowing from the west, a land of peace;  
 Gray halls alone among their massive groves;

Trim hamlets; here and there a rustic tower  
 Half-lost in belts of hop and breadths of wheat;  
 The shimmering glimpses of a stream; the seas;  
 A red sail, or a white; and far beyond,  
 Imagined more than seen, the skirts of France.

'Look there, a garden!' said my college friend,  
 The Tory member's elder son, 'and there!  
 God bless the narrow sea which keeps her off,  
 And keeps our Britain, whole within herself,  
 A nation yet, the rulers and the ruled —  
 Some sense of duty, something of a faith,  
 Some reverence for the laws ourselves have made,  
 Some patient force to change them when we will,  
 Some civic manhood firm against the crowd —  
 But yonder, whiff! there comes a sudden heat,  
 The gravest citizen seems to lose his head,  
 The king is scared, the soldier will not fight,  
 The little boys begin to shoot and stab,  
 A kingdom topples over with a shriek.  
 Like an old woman, and down rolls the world  
 In mock heroics stranger than our own;  
 Revolts, republics, revolutions, most  
 No graver than a schoolboys' barring out;  
 Too comic for the solemn things they are,  
 Too solemn for the comic touches in them,  
 Like our wild Princess with as wise a dream  
 As some of theirs — God bless the narrow seas!  
 I wish they were a whole Atlantic broad.'

'Have patience,' I replied, 'ourselves are full  
 Of social wrong; and maybe wildest dreams  
 Are but the needful preludes of the truth:  
 For me, the genial day, the happy crowd,

The sport half-science, fill me with a faith.  
This fine old world of ours is but a child  
Yet in the go-cart. Patience! Give it  
time  
To learn its limbs: there is a hand that  
guides.'

In such discourse we gain'd the garden  
rails,  
And there we saw Sir Walter where he  
stood.  
Before a tower of crimson holly-oaks,  
Among six boys, head under head, and  
look'd  
No little lily-handed Baronet he,  
A great broad-shoulder'd genial English-  
man,  
A lord of fat prize-oxen and of sheep,  
A raiser of huge melons and of pine,  
A patron of some thirty charities,  
A pamphleteer on guano and on grain,  
A quarter-sessions chairman, abler none;  
Fair-hair'd and redder than a windy morn;  
Now shaking hands with him, now him,  
of those  
That stood the nearest — now address'd  
to speech —  
Who spoke few words and pithy, such as  
closed  
Welcome, farewell, and welcome for the  
year  
To follow: a shout rose again, and made  
The long line of the approaching rookery  
swerve  
From the elms, and shook the branches  
of the deer  
From slope to slope thro' distant ferns,  
and rang  
Beyond the bourn of sunset; O, a shout  
More joyful than the city-roar that hails  
Premier or king! Why should not these  
great Sirs  
Give up their parks some dozen times a  
year  
To let the people breathe? So thrice  
they cried,  
I likewise, and in groups they stream'd  
away.

But we went back to the Abbey, and  
sat on,  
So much the gathering darkness charm'd:  
we sat

But spoke not, rapt in nameless reverie,  
Perchance upon the future man: the  
walls  
Blacken'd about us, bats wheel'd, and  
owls whoop'd,  
And gradually the powers of the night,  
That range above the region of the wind,  
Deepening the courts of twilight broke  
them up  
Thro' all the silent spaces of the worlds,  
Beyond all thought into the Heaven of  
Heavens.

Last little Lilia, rising quietly,  
Disrobed the glimmering statue of Sir  
Ralph  
From those rich silks, and home well-  
pleased we went.

## ODE ON THE DEATH OF THE DUKE OF WELLINGTON.

PUBLISHED IN 1852.

### I.

BURY the Great Duke  
With an empire's lamentation,  
Let us bury the Great Duke  
To the noise of the mourning of a  
mighty nation,  
Mourning when their leaders fall,  
Warriors carry the warrior's pall,  
And sorrow darkens hamlet and hall.

### II.

Where shall we lay the man whom we  
deplore?  
Here, in streaming London's central  
roar.  
Let the sound of those he wrought for,  
And the feet of those he fought for,  
Echo round his bones for evermore.

### III.

Lead out the pageant: sad and slow,  
As fits an universal woe,  
Let the long long procession go,  
And let the sorrowing crowd about it  
grow,  
And let the mournful martial music blow;  
The last great Englishman is low.

## IV.

Mourn, for to us he seems the last,  
Remembering all his greatness in the  
Past.

No more in soldier fashion will he greet  
With lifted hand the gazer in the street.  
O friends, our chief state-oracle is mute :  
Mourn for the man of long-enduring  
blood,

The statesman-warrior, moderate, reso-  
lute,

Whole in himself, a common good.

Mourn for the man of amplest influence,  
Yet clearest of ambitious crime,  
Our greatest yet with least pretence,  
Great in council and great in war,  
Foremost captain of his time,  
Rich in saving common-sense,  
And, as the greatest only are,  
In his simplicity sublime.

O good gray head which all men knew,  
O voice from which their omens all men  
drew,

O iron nerve to true occasion true,  
O fall'n at length that tower of strength  
Which stood four-square to all the winds  
that blew!

Such was he whom we deplore.

The long self-sacrifice of life is o'er.

The great World-victor's victor will be  
seen no more.

## V.

All is over and done :

Render thanks to the Giver,  
England, for thy son.

Let the bell be toll'd.

Render thanks to the Giver,  
And render him to the mould.

Under the cross of gold

That shines over city and river,

There he shall rest for ever

Among the wise and the bold.

Let the bell be toll'd :

And a reverent people behold

The towering car, the sable steeds :

Bright let it be with its blazon'd deeds,

Dark in its funeral fold.

Let the bell be toll'd :

And a deeper knell in the heart be  
knoll'd;

And the sound of the sorrowing anthem  
roll'd

Thro' the dome of the golden cross;  
And the volleying cannon thunder his  
loss;

He knew their voices of old.

For many a time in many a clime

His captain's-ear has heard them boom

Bellowing victory, bellowing doom :

When he with those deep voices wrought,

Guarding realms and kings from shame;

With those deep voices our dead captain  
taught

The tyrant, and asserts his claim

In that dread sound to the great name,

Which he has worn so pure of blame,

In praise and in dispraise the same,

A man of well-temper'd frame.

O civic muse, to such a name,

To such a name for ages long,

To such a name,

Preserve a broad approach of fame,

And ever-echoing avenues of song.

## VI.

Who is he that cometh, like an honour'd  
guest,

With banner and with music, with soldier  
and with priest,

With a nation weeping, and breaking on  
my rest?

Mighty Seaman, this is he

Was great by land as thou by sea.

Thine island loves thee well, thou famous  
man,

The greatest sailor since our world began.

Now, to the roll of muffled drums,

To thee the greatest soldier comes;

For this is he

Was great by land as thou by sea;

His foes were thine; he kept us free.

O give him welcome, this is he

Worthy of our gorgeous rites,

And worthy to be laid by thee;

For this is England's greatest son,

He that gain'd a hundred fights,

Nor ever lost an English gun;

This is he that far away

Against the myriads of Assaye

Clash'd with his fiery few and won;

And underneath another sun,

Warring on a later day,

Round affrighted Lisbon drew  
 The treble works, the vast designs  
 Of his labour'd rampart-lines,  
 Where he greatly stood at bay,  
 Whence he issued forth anew,  
 And ever great and greater grew,  
 Beating from the wasted vines  
 Back to France her banded swarms,  
 Back to France with countless blows,  
 Till o'er the hills her eagles flew  
 Beyond the Pyrenean pines,  
 Follow'd up in valley and glen  
 With blare of bugle, clamour of men,  
 Roll of cannon and clash of arms,  
 And England pouring on her foes.  
 Such a war had such a close.  
 Again their ravening eagle rose  
 In anger, wheel'd on Europe-shadowing  
     wings,  
 And barking for the thrones of kings;  
 Till one that sought but Duty's iron  
     crown  
 On that loud sabbath shook the spoiler  
     down;  
 A day of onsets of despair!  
 Dash'd on every rocky square  
 Their surging charges foam'd themselves  
     away;  
 Last, the Prussian trumpet blew;  
 Thro' the long-tormented air  
 Heaven flash'd a sudden jubilant ray,  
 And down we swept and charged and  
     overthrew.  
 So great a soldier taught us there,  
 What long-enduring hearts could do  
 In that world-earthquake, Waterloo!  
 Mighty Seaman, tender and true,  
 And pure as he from taint of craven guile,  
 O saviour of the silver-coasted isle,  
 O shaker of the Baltic and the Nile,  
 If aught of things that here befall  
 Touch a spirit among things divine,  
 If love of country move thee there at all,  
 Be glad, because his bones are laid by  
     thine!  
 And thro' the centuries let a people's  
     voice  
 In full acclaim,  
 A people's voice,  
 The proof and echo of all human fame,  
 A people's voice, when they rejoice  
 At civic revel and pomp and game,  
 Attest their great commander's claim

With honour, honour, honour, honour  
     to him,  
 Eternal honour to his name.

## VII.

A people's voice! we are a people yet.  
 Tho' all men else their nobler dreams  
     forget,  
 Confused by brainless mobs and lawless  
     Powers;  
 Thank Him who isled us here, and  
     roughly set  
 His Briton in blown seas and storming  
     showers,  
 We have a voice, with which to pay the  
     debt  
 Of boundless love and reverence and  
     regret  
 To those great men who fought, and  
     kept it ours.  
 And keep it ours, O God, from brute  
     control;  
 O Statesmen, guard us, guard the eye,  
     the soul  
 Of Europe, keep our noble England  
     whole,  
 And save the one true seed of freedom  
     sown  
 Betwixt a people and their ancient  
     throne,  
 That sober freedom out of which there  
     springs  
 Our loyal passion for our temperate  
     kings;  
 For, saving that, ye help to save man-  
     kind  
 Till public wrong be crumbled into dust,  
 And drill the raw world for the march  
     of mind,  
 Till crowds at length be sane and crowns  
     be just.  
 But wink no more in slothful overtrust.  
 Remember him who led your hosts;  
 He bade you guard the sacred coasts.  
 Your cannons moulder on the seaward  
     wall;  
 His voice is silent in your council-hall  
 For ever; and whatever tempests lour  
 For ever silent; even if they broke  
 In thunder, silent; yet remember all  
 He spoke among you, and the Man who  
     spoke;

Who never sold the truth to serve the  
hour,  
Nor palter'd with Eternal God for power;  
Who let the turbid streams of rumour  
flow  
Thro' either babbling world of high and  
low;  
Whose life was work, whose language  
rife  
With rugged maxims hewn from life;  
Who never spoke against a foe;  
Whose eighty winters freeze with one  
rebuke  
All great self-seekers trampling on the  
right:  
Truth-teller was our England's Alfred  
named;  
Truth-lover was our English Duke;  
Whatever record leap to light  
He never shall be shamed.

## VIII.

Lo, the leader in these glorious wars  
Now to glorious burial slowly borne,  
Follow'd by the brave of other lands,  
He, on whom from both her open hands  
Lavish Honour shower'd all her stars,  
And affluent Fortune emptied all her  
horn.  
Yea, let all good things await  
Him who cares not to be great,  
But as he saves or serves the state.  
Not once or twice in our rough island-  
story,  
The path of duty was the way to glory:  
He that walks it, only thirsting  
For the right, and learns to deaden  
Love of self, before his journey closes,  
He shall find the stubborn thistle burst-  
ing  
Into glossy purples, which outred  
All voluptuous garden-roses.  
Not once or twice in our fair island-story,  
The path of duty was the way to glory:  
He, that ever following her commands,  
On with toil of heart and knees and  
hands,  
Thro' the long gorge to the far light has  
won  
His path upward, and prevail'd,  
Shall find the toppling crags of Duty  
scaled

Are close upon the shining table-lands  
To which our God Himself is moon and  
sun.  
Such was he: his work is done.  
But while the races of mankind endure,  
Let his great example stand  
Colossal, seen of every land,  
And keep the soldier firm, the statesman  
pure:  
Till in all lands and thro' all human story  
The path of duty be the way to glory:  
And let the land whose hearths he saved  
from shame  
For many and many an age proclaim  
At civic revel and pomp and game,  
And when the long-illuminated cities  
flame,  
Their ever-loyal iron leader's fame,  
With honour, honour, honour, honour to  
him,  
Eternal honour to his name.

## IX.

Peace, his triumph will be sung  
By some yet unmoulded tongue  
Far on in summers that we shall not see:  
Peace, it is a day of pain  
For one about whose patriarchal knee  
Late the little children clung:  
O peace, it is a day of pain  
For one, upon whose hand and heart and  
brain  
Once the weight and fate of Europe hung.  
Ours the pain, be his the gain!  
More than is of man's degree  
Must be with us, watching here  
At this, our great solemnity.  
Whom we see not we revere;  
We revere, and we refrain  
From talk of battles loud and vain,  
And brawling memories all too free  
For such a wise humility  
As befits a solemn fane:  
We revere, and while we hear  
The tides of Music's golden sea  
Setting toward eternity,  
Uplifted high in heart and hope are we,  
Until we doubt not that for one so true  
There must be other nobler work to do  
Than when he fought at Waterloo,  
And Victor he must ever be.  
For tho' the Giant Ages heave the hill

And break the shore, and evermore  
Make and break, and work their will;  
Tho' world on world in myriad myriads  
roll

Round us, each with different powers,  
And other forms of life than ours,  
What know we greater than the soul?  
On God and Godlike men we build our  
trust.

Hush, the Dead March wails in the peo-  
ple's ears:  
The dark crowd moves, and there are  
sobs and tears:

The black earth yawns: the mortal  
disappears;

Ashes to ashes, dust to dust;  
He is gone who seem'd so great. —  
Gone; but nothing can bereave him  
Of the force he made his own  
Being here, and we believe him  
Something far advanced in State,  
And that he wears a truer crown  
Than any wreath that man can weave  
him.

Speak no more of his renown,  
Lay your earthly fancies down,  
And in the vast cathedral leave him,  
God accept him, Christ receive him.

1852.

## THE THIRD OF FEBRUARY,

1852.

My Lords, we heard you speak: you told  
us all

That England's honest censure went  
too far;

That our free press should cease to  
brawl,

Not sting the fiery Frenchman into  
war.

It was our ancient privilege, my Lords,  
To fling whate'er we felt, not fearing, into  
words.

We love not this French God, the child  
of Hell,

Wild War, who breaks the converse of  
the wise;

But though we love kind Peace so well,  
We dare not ev'n by silence sanction  
lies.

It might be safe our censures to with-  
draw;

And yet, my Lords, not well: there is a  
higher law.

As long as we remain, we must speak  
free,

Tho' all the storm of Europe on us  
break;

No little German state are we,  
But the one voice in Europe: we *must*  
speak;

That if to-night our greatness were struck  
dead,

There might be left some record of the  
things we said.

If you be fearful, then must we be bold.  
Our Britain cannot salve a tyrant  
o'er.

Better the waste Atlantic roll'd  
On her and us and ours for ever-  
more.

What! have we fought for Freedom from  
our prime,

At last to dodge and palter with a public  
crime?

Shall we fear *him*? our own we never  
fear'd.

From our first Charles by force we  
wring our claims.

Prick'd by the Papal spur, we rear'd,  
We flung the burthen of the second  
James.

I say, we *never* feared! and as for these,  
We broke them on the land, we drove  
them on the seas.

And you, my Lords, you make the people  
muse

In doubt if you be of our Barons' breed—  
Were those your sires who fought at  
Lewes?

Is this the manly strain of Runnymede?  
O fall'n nobility, that, overawed,  
Would lisp in honey'd whispers of this  
monstrous fraud!

*We* feel, at least, that silence here were  
sin,

Not ours the fault if we have feeble  
hosts—



If easy patrons of their kin  
 Have left the last free race with naked  
 coasts!  
 They knew the precious things they had  
 to guard:  
 For us, we will not spare the tyrant one  
 hard word.

Tho' niggard throats of Manchester may  
 bawl,  
 What England was, shall her true sons  
 forget?  
 We are not cotton-spinners all,  
 But some love England and her honour  
 yet.  
 And these in our Thermopylæ shall  
 stand,  
 And hold against the world this honour  
 of the land.

### THE CHARGE OF THE LIGHT BRIGADE.

#### I.

HALF a league, half a league,  
 Half a league onward,  
 All in the valley of Death  
 Rode the six hundred.  
 'Forward, the Light Brigade!  
 Charge for the guns!' he said:  
 Into the valley of Death  
 Rode the six hundred.

#### II.

'Forward, the Light Brigade!'  
 Was there a man dismay'd?  
 Not tho' the soldier knew  
 Some one had blunder'd:  
 Theirs not to make reply,  
 Theirs not to reason why,  
 Theirs but to do and die:  
 Into the valley of Death  
 Rode the six hundred.

#### III.

Cannon to right of them,  
 Cannon to left of them,  
 Cannon in front of them  
 Volley'd and thunder'd;  
 Storm'd at with shot and shell,  
 Boldly they rode and well,

Into the jaws of Death,  
 Into the mouth of Hell  
 Rode the six hundred.

#### IV.

Flash'd all their sabres bare,  
 Flash'd as they turn'd in air  
 Sabring the gunners there,  
 Charging an army, while  
 All the world wonder'd:  
 Plunged in the battery-smoke  
 Right thro' the line they broke;  
 Cossack and Russian  
 Reel'd from the sabre-stroke  
 Shatter'd and sunder'd.  
 Then they rode back, but not—  
 Not the six hundred.

#### V.

Cannon to right of them,  
 Cannon to left of them,  
 Cannon behind them  
 Volley'd and thunder'd;  
 Storm'd at with shot and shell,  
 While horse and hero fell,  
 They that had fought so well  
 Came thro' the jaws of Death,  
 Back from the mouth of Hell,  
 All that was left of them,  
 Left of six hundred.

#### VI.

When can their glory fade?  
 O the wild charge they made!  
 All the world wonder'd.  
 Honour the charge they made!  
 Honour the Light Brigade,  
 Noble six hundred!

### ODE SUNG AT THE OPENING OF THE INTERNATIONAL EX- HIBITION.

#### I.

UPLIFT a thousand voices full and sweet,  
 In this wide hall with earth's invention  
 stored,  
 And praise the invisible universal  
 Lord,  
 Who lets once more in peace the nations  
 meet,

Where Science, Art, and Labour have  
 outpour'd  
 Their myriad horns of plenty at our feet.

## II.

O silent father of our Kings to be  
 Mourn'd in this golden hour of jubilee,  
 For this, for all, we weep our thanks to  
 thee!

## III.

The world-compelling plan was thine,—  
 And, lo! the long laborious miles  
 Of Palace; lo! the giant aisles,  
 Rich in model and design;  
 Harvest-tool and husbandry,  
 Loom and wheel and enginery,  
 Secrets of the sullen mine,  
 Steel and gold, and corn and wine,  
 Fabric rough, or fairy-fine,  
 Sunny tokens of the Line,  
 Polar marvels, and a feast  
 Of wonder, out of West and East,  
 And shapes and hues of Art divine!  
 All of beauty, all of use,  
 That one fair planet can produce,  
 Brought from under every star,  
 Blown from over every main,  
 And mixt, as life is mixt with pain,  
 The works of peace with works of war.

## IV.

Is the goal so far away?  
 Far, how far no tongue can say,  
 Let us dream our dream to-day.

## V.

O ye, the wise who think, the wise who  
 reign,  
 From growing commerce loose her latest  
 chain,  
 And let the fair white-wing'd peacemaker  
 fly  
 To happy havens under all the sky,  
 And mix the seasons and the golden  
 hours;  
 Till each man find his own in all men's  
 good,  
 And all men work in noble brotherhood,  
 Breaking their mailed fleets and armed  
 towers,

And ruling by obeying Nature's powers,  
 And gathering all the fruits of earth and  
 crown'd with all her flowers.

## A WELCOME TO ALEXANDRA.

MARCH 7, 1863.

SEA-KINGS' daughter from over the sea,  
 Alexandria!  
 Saxon and Norman and Dane are we,  
 But all of us Danes in our welcome of  
 thee, Alexandria!  
 Welcome her, thunders of fort and of fleet!  
 Welcome her, thundering cheer of the  
 street!  
 Welcome her, all things youthful and  
 sweet,  
 Scatter the blossom under her feet!  
 Break, happy land, into earlier flowers!  
 Make music, O bird, in the new-budded  
 bowers!  
 Blazon your mottoes of blessing and  
 prayer!  
 Welcome her, welcome her, all that is  
 ours!  
 Warble, O bugle, and trumpet, blare!  
 Flags, flutter out upon turrets and towers!  
 Flames, on the windy headland flare!  
 Utter your jubilee, steeple and spire!  
 Clash, ye bells, in the merry March air!  
 Flash, ye cities, in rivers of fire!  
 Rush to the roof, sudden rocket, and  
 higher  
 Melt into stars for the land's desire!  
 Roll and rejoice, jubilant voice,  
 Roll as a ground-swell dash'd on the  
 strand,  
 Roar as the sea when he welcomes the  
 land,  
 And welcome her, welcome the land's  
 desire,  
 The sea-kings' daughter as happy as fair,  
 Blissful bride of a blissful heir,  
 Bride of the heir of the kings of the  
 sea—  
 O joy to the people and joy to the throne,  
 Come to us, love us and make us your  
 own:  
 For Saxon or Dane or Norman we,  
 Teuton or Celt, or whatever we be,  
 We are each all Dane in our welcome of  
 thee, Alexandria!

A WELCOME TO HER ROYAL  
HIGHNESS MARIE ALEXAN-  
DROVNA, DUCHESS OF EDIN-  
BURGH.

MARCH 7, 1874.

I.

THE Son of him with whom we strove  
for power —

Whose will is lord thro' all his world-  
domain —

Who made the serf a man, and burst  
his chain —

Has given our Prince his own imperial  
Flower,

Alexandrovna.

And welcome, Russian flower, a people's  
pride,

To Britain, when her flowers begin to  
blow!

From love to love, from home to home  
you go,

From mother unto mother, stately bride,  
Marie Alexandrovna!

II.

The golden news along the steppes is  
blown,

And at thy name the Tartar tents are  
stirr'd;

Elburz and all the Caucasus have  
heard;

And all the sultry palms of India known,  
Alexandrovna.

The voices of our universal sea

On capes of Afric as on cliffs of Kent,

The Maoris and that Isle of Continent,

And loyal pines of Canada murmur thee,  
Marie Alexandrovna!

III.

Fair empires branching, both, in lusty  
life! —

Yet Harold's England fell to Norman  
swords;

Yet thine own land has bow'd to  
Tartar hordes

Since English Harold gave its throne a  
wife,

Alexandrovna!

For thrones and peoples are as waifs that  
swing,

And float or fall, in endless ebb and  
flow;

But who love best have best the grace  
to know

That Love by right divine is deathless  
king,

Marie Alexandrovna!

IV.

And Love has led thee to the stranger  
land,

Where men are bold and strongly say  
their say; —

See, empire upon empire smiles to-  
day,

As thou with thy young lover hand in  
hand

Alexandrovna!

So now thy fuller life is in the west,

Whose hand at home was gracious to  
thy poor:

Thy name was blest within the narrow  
door;

Here also Marie, shall thy name be blest,  
Marie Alexandrovna!

V.

Shall fears and jealous hatreds flame  
again?

Or at thy coming, Princess, every-  
where,

The blue heaven break, and some  
diviner air

Breathe thro' the world and change the  
hearts of men,

Alexandrovna?

But hearts that change not, love that  
cannot cease,

And peace be yours, the peace of soul  
in soul!

And howsoever this wild world may roll,  
Between your peoples truth and manful  
peace,

Alfred — Alexandrovna!

## THE GRANDMOTHER.

## I.

AND Willy, my eldest-born, is gone, you say, little Anne?  
Ruddy and white, and strong on his legs, he looks like a man.  
And Willy's wife has written: she never was over-wise,  
Never the wife for Willy: he wouldn't take my advice.

## II.

For, Annie, you see, her father was not the man to save,  
Hadn't a head to manage, and drank himself into his grave.  
Pretty enough, very pretty! but I was against it for one.  
Eh! — but he wouldn't hear me — and Willy, you say, is gone.

## III.

Willy, my beauty, my eldest-born, the flower of the flock;  
Never a man could fling him: for Willy stood like a rock.  
'Here's a leg for a babe of a week!' says doctor; and he would be bound,  
There was not his like that year in twenty parishes round.

## IV.

Strong of his hands, and strong on his legs, but still of his tongue!  
I ought to have gone before him: I wonder he went so young.  
I cannot cry for him, Annie: I have not long to stay;  
Perhaps I shall see him the sooner, for he lived far away.

## V.

Why do you look at me, Annie? you think I am hard and cold;  
But all my children have gone before me, I am so old:  
I cannot weep for Willy, nor can I weep for the rest;  
Only at your age, Annie, I could have wept with the best.

## VI.

For I remember a quarrel I had with your father, my dear,  
All for a slanderous story, that cost me many a tear.  
I mean your grandfather, Annie: it cost me a world of woe,  
Seventy years ago, my darling, seventy years ago.

## VII.

For Jenny, my cousin, had come to the place, and I knew right well  
That Jenny had tript in her time: I knew, but I would not tell.  
And she to be coming and slandering me, the base little liar!  
But the tongue is a fire as you know, my dear, the tongue is a fire.

## VIII.

And the parson made it his text that week, and he said likewise,  
That a lie which is half a truth is ever the blackest of lies,  
That a lie which is all a lie may be met and fought with outright,  
But a lie which is part a truth is a harder matter to fight.

## IX.

And Willy had not been down to the farm for a week and a day;  
And all things look'd half-dead, tho' it was the middle of May.  
Jenny, to slander me, who knew what Jenny had been!  
But soiling another, Annie, will never make oneself clean.

## X.

And I cried myself well-nigh blind, and all of an evening late  
I climb'd to the top of the garth, and stood by the road at the gate.  
The moon like a rick on fire was rising over the dale,  
And whit, whit, whit, in the bush beside me chirrup the nightingale.

## XI.

All of a sudden he stopt: there past by the gate of the farm,  
Willy, — he didn't see me, — and Jenny hung on his arm.  
Out into the road I started, and spoke I scarce knew how;  
Ah, there's no fool like the old one — it makes me angry now.

## XII.

Willy stood up like a man, and look'd the thing that he meant;  
Jenny, the viper, made me a mocking curtsey and went.  
And I said, 'Let us part: in a hundred years it'll all be the same,  
You cannot love me at all, if you love not my good name.'

## XIII.

And he turn'd, and I saw his eyes all wet, in the sweet moonshine:  
'Sweetheart, I love you so well that your good name is mine.  
And what do I care for Jane, let her speak of you well or ill;  
But marry me out of hand: we two shall be happy still.'

## XIV.

'Marry you, Willy!' said I, 'but I needs must speak my mind,  
And I fear you'll listen to tales, be jealous and hard and unkind.'  
But he turn'd and claspt me in his arms, and answer'd, 'No, love, no;  
Seventy years ago, my darling, seventy years ago.'

## XV.

So Willy and I were wedded: I wore a lilac gown;  
And the ringers rang with a will, and he gave the ringers a crown.  
But the first that ever I bare was dead before he was born,  
Shadow and shine is life, little Annie, flower and thorn.

## XVI.

That was the first time, too, that ever I thought of death.  
There lay the sweet little body that never had drawn a breath.  
I had not wept, little Anne, not since I had been a wife;  
But I wept like a child that day, for the babe had fought for his life.

## XVII.

His dear little face was troubled, as if with anger or pain :  
 I look'd at the still little body — his trouble had all been in vain.  
 For Willy I cannot weep, I shall see him another morn :  
 But I wept like a child for the child that was dead before he was born.

## XVIII.

But he cheer'd me, my good man, for he seldom said me nay :  
 Kind, like a man, was he ; like a man, too, would have his way :  
 Never jealous — not he : we had many a happy year ;  
 And he died, and I could not weep — my own time seem'd so near.

## XIX.

But I wish'd it had been God's will that I, too, then could have died :  
 I began to be tired a little, and fain had slept at his side.  
 And that was ten years back, or more, if I don't forget :  
 But as to the children, Annie, they're all about me yet.

## XX.

Pattering over the boards, my Annie who left me at two,  
 Patter she goes, my own little Annie, an Annie like you :  
 Pattering over the boards, she comes and goes at her will,  
 While Harry is in the five-acre and Charlie ploughing the hill.

## XXI.

And Harry and Charlie, I hear them too — they sing to their team :  
 Often they come to the door in a pleasant kind of a dream.  
 They come and sit by my chair, they hover about my bed —  
 I am not always certain if they be alive or dead.

## XXII.

And yet I know for a truth, there's none of them left alive ;  
 For Harry went at sixty, your father at sixty-five :  
 And Willy, my eldest-born, at nigh threescore and ten ;  
 I knew them all as babies, and now they're elderly men.

## XXIII.

For mine is a time of peace, it is not often I grieve ;  
 I am oftener sitting at home in my father's farm at eve :  
 And the neighbours come and laugh and gossip, and so do I ;  
 I find myself often laughing at things that have long gone by.

## XXIV.

To be sure the preacher says, our sins should make us sad :  
 But mine is a time of peace, and there is Grace to be had ;  
 And God, not man, is the Judge of us all when life shall cease ;  
 And in this Book, little Annie, the message is one of Peace.



## XXV.

And age is a time of peace, so it be free from pain,  
 And happy has been my life; but I would not live it again.  
 I seem to be tired a little, that's all, and long for rest;  
 Only at your age, Annie, I could have wept with the best.

## XXVI.

So Willy has gone, my beauty, my eldest-born, my flower;  
 But how can I weep for Willy, he has but gone for an hour,—  
 Gone for a minute, my son, from this room into the next;  
 I, too, shall go in a minute. What time have I to be vext?

## XXVII.

And Willy's wife has written, she never was over-wise.  
 Get me my glasses, Annie: thank God that I keep my eyes.  
 There is but a trifle left you, when I shall have past away.  
 But stay with the old woman now: you cannot have long to stay.

## NORTHERN FARMER.

## OLD STYLE.

## I.

WHEER 'asta beän saw long and meä liggin' 'ere aloän?  
 Noorse? thourt nowt o' a noorse: whoy, Doctor's abeän an' agoän:  
 Says that I moänt 'a naw moor aäle: but I beänt a fool:  
 Git ma my aäle, fur I beänt a-gawin' to break my rule.

## II.

Doctors, they knaws nowt, fur a says what's nawways true:  
 Naw soort o' koind o' use to saäy the things that a do.  
 I've 'ed my point o' aäle ivry noight sin' I beän 'ere.  
 An' I've 'ed my quart ivry market-noight for foorty year.

## III.

Parson's a beän loikewise, an' a sittin' 'ere o' my bed.  
 'The amoighty's a taäkin o' you<sup>1</sup> to 'issén, my friend,' a said,  
 An' a towd ma my sins, an's toithe were due, an' I gied it in hond;  
 I done moy duty boy 'um, as I 'a done boy the lond.

## IV.

Larn'd a ma' beä. I reckons I 'annot sa mooch to larn.  
 But a cast oop, thot a did, 'bout Bessy Marris's barne.  
 Thaw a knaws I hallus voäted wi' Squoire an' choorch an' staäte,  
 An' i' the woost o' toimes I wur niver agin the raäte.

<sup>1</sup> ou as in hour.

## V.

An' I hallus coom'd to 's chooch afoor moy Sally wur deääd,  
 An' 'eärd 'um a bummin' awaäy loike a buzzard-clock<sup>1</sup> ower my 'eääd,  
 An' I niver knaw'd whot a meän'd but I thowt a 'ad summüt to saäy,  
 An' I thowt a said whot a owt to 'a said an' I coom'd awaäy.

## VI.

Bessy Marris's barne! tha knaws she laäid it to meä.  
 Mowt a beän, mayhap, for she wur a bad un, sheä.  
 'Siver, I kep 'um, I kep 'um my lass, tha mun understand;  
 I done moy duty boy 'um as I 'a done boy the lond.

## VII.

But Parson a cooms an' a goäs, an' a says it eäsy an' freeä  
 'The amoighty's a taäkin o' you to 'issén, my friend,' says 'eä.  
 I weänt saäy men be loiars, thaw summun said it in 'aäste:  
 But 'e reäds wonn sarmin a weeäk, an' I 'a stubb'd Thurnaby waäste.

## VIII.

D'ya moind the waäste, my lass? naw, naw, tha was not born then;  
 Theer wur a boggle in it, I often 'eärd 'um mysen;  
 Moäst loike a butter-bump,<sup>2</sup> fur I 'eärd 'um about an' about,  
 But I stubb'd 'um oop wi' the lot, an' raäved an' rembled 'um out.

## IX.

Keäper's it wur; fo' they fun 'um theer a-laäid of 'is faäce  
 Down i' the woild 'enemies<sup>3</sup> afoor I coom'd to the plaäce.  
 Noäks or Thimbleby — toäner<sup>4</sup> 'ed shot 'um as deääd as a naäil.  
 Noäks wur 'ang'd for it oop at 'soize — but git ma my aäle.

## X.

Dubbüt looök at the waäste: theer warn't not feeääd for a cow;  
 Nowt at all but bracken an' fuzz, an' looök at it now —  
 Warn't worth nowt a haäcre, an' now theer's lots o' feeääd,  
 Fourscoor<sup>5</sup> yows upon it an' some on it down i' seeääd.<sup>6</sup>

## XI.

Nobbut a bit on it's left, an' I meän'd to 'a stubb'd it at fall,  
 Done it ta-year I meän'd, an' runn'd plow thruff it an' all,  
 If godamoighty an' parson 'ud nobbut let ma aloän,  
 Meä, wi' haäte hoonderd haäcre o' Squire's, an' lond o' my oän.

## XII.

Do godamoighty knaw what a's doing a-taäkin' o' meä?  
 I beänt wonn as saws 'ere a beän an' yonder a peä;  
 An' Squire 'ull be sa mad an' all — a' dear a' dear!  
 And I 'a managed for Squire coom Michaelmas thutty year.

<sup>1</sup> Cockchafer.<sup>2</sup> Bittern.<sup>3</sup> Anemones.<sup>4</sup> One or other.<sup>5</sup> ou as in hour.<sup>6</sup> Clover.

## XIII.

A mowt 'a taäen owd Joänes, as 'ant not a 'aäpoth o' sense,  
 Or a mowt 'a taäen young Robins — a niver mended a fence:  
 But godamoighy a moost taäke meä an' taäke ma now  
 Wi' aäf the cows to cauve an' Thurnaby hoälms to plow!

## XIV.

Looök 'ow quoloty smoiles when they seeäs ma a passin' boy, •  
 Says to thessén naw, doubt ' what a man a beä sewer-loy!'  
 Fur they knaws what I beän to Squoire sin fust a coom'd to the 'All;  
 I done moy duty by Squoire an' I done moy duty boy hall.

## XV.

Squoire's i' Lunnon, an' summun I reckons 'ull 'a to wroite,  
 For whoä's to howd the lond ater meä thot muddles ma quoit;  
 Sartin-sewer I beä, thot a weänt niver give it to Joänes,  
 Naw, nor a moänt to Robins — a niver rembles the stoäns.

## XVI.

But summun 'ull come ater meä mayhap wi' 'is kittle o' steäm  
 Huzzin' an' maäzin' the blessed feälds wi' the Divil's oän teäm.  
 Sin' I mun doy I mun doy, thaw loife they says is sweet,  
 But sin' I mun doy I mun doy, for I couldn abeär to see it.

## XVII.

What atta stannin' theer fur, an' doesn bring ma the aäle?  
 Doctor's a 'toättler, lass, an a's hallus i' the owd taäle;  
 I weänt breäk rules fur Doctor, a knaws naw moor nor a floy;  
 Git ma my aäle I tell tha, an' if I mun doy I mun doy.

## NORTHERN FARMER.

## NEW STYLE.

## I.

DOSN'T thou 'ear my 'erse's legs, as they canters awaäy?  
 Proputty, proputty, proputty — that's what I 'ears 'em saäy.  
 Proputty, proputty, proputty — Sam, thou's an ass for thy paaäns:  
 Theer's moor sense i' one o' 'is legs nor in all thy braaäns.

## II.

Woä — theer's a craw to pluck wi' tha, Sam: yon's parson's 'ouse —  
 Dosn't thou know that a man mun be eäther a man or a mouse?  
 Time to think on it then; for thou'lt be twenty to weeäk.<sup>1</sup>  
 Proputty, proputty — woä then woä — let ma 'ear mysén speäk.

<sup>1</sup> This week.

## III.

Me an' thy muther, Sammy, 'as beän a-talkin' o' thee;  
 Thou's beän talkin' to muther, an' she beän a tellin' it me.  
 Thou'll not marry for munny — thou's sweet upo' parson's lass —  
 Noä — thou'll marry for luvv — an' we boäth on us thinks tha an ass.

## IV.

Seeä'd her todaäy goä by — Saäint's-daäy — they was ringing the bells.  
 She's a beauty thou thinks — an' soä is scoors o' gells,  
 Them as 'as munny an' all — wot's a beauty? — the flower as blaws.  
 But propuppy, propuppy sticks, an' propuppy, propuppy graws.

## V.

Do'ant be stunt: <sup>1</sup> taäke time: I knaws what maäkes tha sa mad.  
 Warn't I craäzed fur the lasses mysén when I wur a lad?  
 But I knaw'd a Quaäker feller as often 'as tow'd ma this:  
 'Doänt thou marry for munny, but goä wheer munny is!'

## VI.

An' I went wheer munny war: an' thy muther coom to 'and,  
 Wi' lots o' munny laaid by, an' a nicetish bit o' land.  
 Maäybe she warn't a beauty: — I niver giv it a thowt —  
 But warn't she as good to cuddle an' kiss as a lass as 'ant nowt?

## VII.

Parson's lass 'ant nowt, an' she weänt 'a nowt when 'e's deäd,  
 Mun be a guvness, lad, or summut, and addle<sup>2</sup> her breäd:  
 Why? fur 'e's nobbut a curate, an' weänt niver git hissén clear,  
 An' 'e maäde the bed as 'e ligs on afoor 'e coom'd to the shere.

## VIII.

'An thin 'e coom'd to the parish wi' lots o' Varsity debt,  
 Stook to his taail they did, an' 'e 'ant got shut on 'em yet.  
 An' 'e ligs on 'is back i' the grip, wi' noän to lend 'im a shuvv,  
 Woorse nor a far-welter'd<sup>3</sup> yowe: fur, Sammy, 'e married fur luvv.

## IX.

Luvv? what's luvv? thou can luvv thy lass an' 'er munny too,  
 Maakin' 'em goä together as they've good right to do.  
 Couldn I luvv thy muther by cause o' 'er munny laaid by?  
 Naäy — fur I luvv'd 'er a vast sight moor fur it: reäson why.'

## X.

Ay an' thy muther says thou wants to marry the lass,  
 Cooms of a gentleman burn: an' we boäth on us thinks tha an ass.  
 Woä then, propuppy, wiltha? — an ass as near as mays nowt<sup>4</sup> —  
 Woä then, wiltha? dangtha! — the bees is as fell as owt.<sup>5</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Obstinate.<sup>2</sup> Earn.<sup>3</sup> Or fow-welter'd, — said of a sheep lying on its back.<sup>4</sup> Makes nothing.<sup>5</sup> The flies are as fierce as anything.

## XI.

Break me a bit o' the esh for his 'eäd, lad, out o' the fence!  
Gentleman burn! what's gentleman burn? is it shillins an' pence?  
Proputty, proputty's ivrything 'ere, an', Sammy, I'm blest  
If it isn't the saäme oop yonder, fur them as 'as it's the best.

## XII.

Tis'n them as 'as munny as breäks into 'ouses an' steäls,  
Them as 'as coäts to their backs an' taäkes their regular meäls.  
Noä, but it's them as niver knaws wheer a meäl's to be 'ad.  
Taäke my word for it, Sammy, the poor in a loomp is bad.

## XIII.

Them or thir feythers, tha sees, mun 'a beän a laäzy lot,  
Fur work mun 'a gone to the gittin' whiniver munny was got.  
Feyther 'ad ammost nowt; leästways 'is munny was 'id.  
But 'e tued an' moil'd 'issén deäd, an' 'e died a good un, 'e did.

## XIV.

Looök thou theer wheer Wigglesby beck cooms out by the 'ill!  
Feyther run oop to the farm, an' I runs oop to the mill;  
An' I'll run oop to the brig, an' that thou'll live to see;  
And if thou marries a good un I'll leäve the land to thee.

## XV.

Thim's my noätions, Sammy, wheerby I means to stick;  
But if thou marries a bad un, I'll leäve the land to Dick. —  
Coom oop, proputty, proputty — that's what I 'ears 'im saäy —  
Proputty, proputty, proputty — canter an' canter awaäy.

## THE DAISY.

WRITTEN AT EDINBURGH.

O LOVE, what hours were thine and mine,

In lands of palm and southern pine;  
In lands of palm, of orange-blossom,  
Of olive, aloe, and maize and vine.

What Roman strength Turbia show'd  
In ruin, by the mountain road;

How like a gem, beneath, the city  
Of little Monaco, basking, glow'd.

How richly down the rocky dell  
The torrent vineyard streaming fell  
To meet the sun and sunny waters,  
That only heaved with a summer swell.

What slender campanili grew  
By bays, the peacock's neck in hue;  
Where, here and there, on sandy  
beaches  
A milky-bell'd amaryllis blew.

How young Columbus seem'd to rove,  
Yet present in his natal grove,  
Now watching high on mountain cor-  
nice,  
And steering, now, from a purple cove,

Now pacing mute by ocean's rim;  
Till, in a narrow street and dim,  
I stay'd the wheels at Cogoletto,  
And drank, and loyally drank to him.

Nor knew we well what pleased us most,  
Not the clipt palm of which they boast;

But distant colour, happy hamlet,  
A moulder'd citadel on the coast,

Or tower, or high hill-convent, seen  
A light amid its olives green;  
Or olive-hoary cape in ocean;  
Or rosy blossom in hot ravine,

Where oleanders flush'd the bed  
Of silent torrents, gravel-spread;  
And, crossing, oft we saw the glisten  
Of ice, far up on a mountain head.

We loved that hall, tho' white and cold,  
Those niched shapes of noble mould,  
A princely people's awful princes,  
The grave, severe Genovese of old.

At Florence too what golden hours,  
In those long galleries, were ours;  
What drives about the fresh Cascinè,  
Or walks in Boboli's ducal bowers.

In bright vignettes, and each complete,  
Of tower or duomo, sunny-sweet,  
Or palace, how the city glitter'd,  
Thro' cypress avenues, at our feet.

But when we crost the Lombard plain  
Remember what a plague of rain;  
Of rain at Reggio, rain at Parma;  
At Lodi, rain, Piacenza, rain.

And stern and sad (so rare the smiles  
Of sunlight) look'd the Lombard piles;  
Porch-pillars on the lion resting,  
And sombre, old, colonnaded aisles.

O Milan, O the chanting quires,  
The giant windows' blazon'd fires,  
The height, the space, the gloom, the  
glory!  
A mount of marble, a hundred spires!

I climb'd the roofs at break of day  
Sun-smitten Alps before me lay.  
I stood among the silent statues,  
And statued pinnacles, mute as they.

How faintly-flush'd, how phantom-fair,  
Was Monte Rosa, hanging there  
A thousand shadowy-pencill'd valleys  
And snowy dells in a golden air.

Remember how we came at last  
To Como; shower and storm and blast  
Had blown the lake beyond his limit,  
And all was flooded; and how we past

From Como, when the light was gray,  
And in my head, for half the day,  
The rich Virgilian rustic measure  
Of Lari Maxume, all the way,

Like ballad-burthen music, kept,  
As on the Lariano crept  
To that fair port below the castle  
Of Queen Theodolind, where we slept;

Or hardly slept, but watch'd awake  
A cypress in the moonlight shake,  
The moonlight touching o'er a terrace  
One tall Agavè above the lake.

What more? we took our last adieu,  
And up the snowy Splügen drew,  
But ere we reach'd the highest summit  
I pluck'd a daisy, I gave it you.

It told of England then to me,  
And now it tells of Italy.  
O love, we two shall go no longer  
To lands of summer across the sea;

So dear a life your arms enfold  
Whose crying is a cry for gold:  
Yet here to-night in this dark city,  
When ill and weary, alone and cold,

I found, tho' crush'd to hard and dry,  
This nurseling of another sky  
Still in the little book you lent me,  
And where you tenderly laid it by:

And I forgot the clouded Forth,  
The gloom that saddens Heaven and  
Earth,  
The bitter east, the misty summer  
And gray metropolis of the North.

Perchance, to lull the throbs of pain,  
Perchance, to charm a vacant brain;  
Perchance, to dream you still beside  
me,  
My fancy fled to the South again.



## TO THE REV. F. D. MAURICE.

COME, when no graver cares employ,  
 Godfather, come and see your boy :  
 Your presence will be sun in winter,  
 Making the little one leap for joy.

For, being of that honest few,  
 Who give the Fiend himself his due,  
 Should eighty-thousand college-coun-  
 cils  
 Thunder 'Anathema,' friend, at you;

Should all our churchmen foam in spite  
 At you, so careful of the right,  
 Yet one lay-hearth would give you  
 welcome  
 (Take it and come) to the Isle of Wight;

Where, far from noise and smoke of town,  
 I watch the twilight falling brown  
 All round a careless-order'd garden  
 Close to the ridge of a noble down.

You'll have no scandal while you dine,  
 But honest talk and wholesome wine,  
 And only hear the magpie gossip  
 Garrulous under a roof of pine :

For groves of pine on either hand,  
 To break the blast of winter, stand;  
 And further on, the hoary Channel  
 Tumbles a billow on chalk and sand;

Where, if below the milky steep  
 Some ship of battle slowly creep,  
 And on thro' zones of light and shadow  
 Glimmer away to the lonely deep,

We might discuss the Northern sin  
 Which made a selfish war begin;  
 Dispute the claims, arrange the chances;  
 Emperor, Ottoman, which shall win :

Or whether war's avenging rod  
 Shall lash all Europe into blood;  
 Till you should turn to dearer matters,  
 Dear to the man that is dear to God;

How best to help the slender store,  
 How mend the dwellings, of the poor;  
 How gain in life, as life advances,  
 Valour and charity more and more.

Come, Maurice, come: the lawn as yet  
 Is hoar with rime, or spongy-wet;  
 But when the wreath of March has  
 blossom'd,  
 Crocus, anemone, violet,

Or later, pay one visit here,  
 For those are few we hold as dear;  
 Nor pay but one, but come for many,  
 Many and many a happy year.

*January, 1854.*

## WILL.

## I.

O WELL for him whose will is strong!  
 He suffers, but he will not suffer long;  
 He suffers, but he cannot suffer wrong :  
 For him nor moves the loud world's  
 random mock,  
 Nor all Calamity's hugest waves confound,  
 Who seems a promontory of rock,  
 That, compass'd round with turbulent  
 sound,  
 In middle ocean meets the surging shock,  
 Tempest-buffeted, citadel-crown'd.

## II.

But ill for him who, bettering not with  
 time,  
 Corrupts the strength of heaven-de-  
 scended Will,  
 And ever weaker grows thro' acted crime,  
 Or seeming-genial venial fault,  
 Recurring and suggesting still!  
 He seems as one whose footsteps halt,  
 Toiling in immeasurable sand,  
 And o'er a weary sultry land,  
 Far beneath a blazing vault,  
 Sown in a wrinkle of the monstrous hill,  
 The city sparkles like a grain of salt.

IN THE VALLEY OF  
CAUTERETZ.

ALL along the valley, stream that flashest  
 white,  
 Deepening thy voice with the deepening  
 of the night,  
 All along the valley, where thy waters  
 flow,

I walk'd with one I loved two and thirty  
 years ago.  
 All along the valley, while I walk'd to-  
 day,  
 The two and thirty years were a mist that  
 rolls away;  
 For all along the valley, down thy rocky  
 bed,  
 Thy living voice to me was as the voice  
 of the dead,  
 And all along the valley, by rock and  
 cave and tree,  
 The voice of the dead was a living voice  
 to me.

### IN THE GARDEN AT SWAINSTON.

NIGHTINGALES warbled without,  
 Within was weeping for thee:  
 Shadows of three dead men  
 Walk'd in the walks with me,  
 Shadows of three dead men and thou  
 wast one of the three.

Nightingales sang in his woods:  
 The Master was far away:  
 Nightingales warbled and sang  
 Of a passion that lasts but a day;  
 Still in the house in his coffin the Prince  
 of courtesy lay.

Two dead men have I known  
 In courtesy like to thee:  
 Two dead men have I loved  
 With a love that will ever be:  
 Three dead men have I loved and thou  
 art last of the three.

### THE FLOWER.

ONCE in a golden hour  
 I cast to earth a seed.  
 Up there came a flower,  
 The people said, a weed.

To and fro they went  
 Thro' my garden-bower,  
 And muttering discontent  
 Cursed me and my flower.

Then it grew so tall  
 It wore a crown of light,  
 But thieves from o'er the wall  
 Stole the seed by night.

Sow'd it far and wide  
 By every town and tower,  
 Till all the people cried,  
 'Splendid is the flower.'

Read my little fable:  
 He that runs may read.  
 Most can raise the flowers now,  
 For all have got the seed.

And some are pretty enough,  
 And some are poor indeed;  
 And now again the people  
 Call it but a weed.

### REQUIESCAT.

FAIR is her cottage in its place.  
 Where yon broad water sweetly slowly  
 glides.  
 It sees itself from thatch to base  
 Dream in the sliding tides.

And fairer she, but ah how soon to die!  
 Her quiet dream of life this hour may  
 cease.  
 Her peaceful being slowly passes by  
 To some more perfect peace.

### THE SAILOR BOY.

HE rose at dawn and, fired with hope,  
 Shot o'er the seething harbour-bar,  
 And reach'd the ship and caught the  
 rope,  
 And whistled to the morning star.

And while he whistled long and loud  
 He heard a fierce mermaiden cry,  
 'O boy, tho' thou art young and proud,  
 I see the place where thou wilt lie.

'The sands and yeasty surges mix  
 In caves about the dreary bay,  
 And on thy ribs the limpet sticks,  
 And in thy heart the scrawl shall play.'

'Fool,' he answer'd, 'death is sure  
To those that stay and those that roam,  
But I will nevermore endure  
To sit with empty hands at home.'

'My mother clings about my neck,  
My sisters crying, "Stay for shame;"  
My father raves of death and wreck,  
They are all to blame, they are all to  
blame.'

'God help me! save I take my part  
Of danger on the roaring sea,  
A devil rises in my heart,  
Far worse than any death to me.'

## THE ISLET.

'WHITHER, O whither, love, shall we go,'  
For a score of sweet little summers or so?  
The sweet little wife of the singer said,  
On the day that follow'd the day she was  
wed,

'Whither, O whither, love, shall we go?'  
And the singer shaking his curly head  
Turn'd as he sat, and struck the keys  
There at his right with a sudden crash,  
Singing, 'And shall it be over the seas  
With a crew that is neither rude nor  
rash,

But a bevy of Eroses apple-cheek'd,  
In a shallop of crystal ivory-beak'd,  
With a satin sail of a ruby glow,  
To a sweet little Eden on earth that I  
know,

A mountain islet pointed and peak'd?  
Waves on a diamond shingle dash,  
Cataract brooks to the ocean run,  
Fairly-delicate palaces shine  
Mixt with myrtle and clad with vine,  
And overstream'd and silvery-streak'd  
With many a rivulet high against the  
Sun

The facets of the glorious mountain flash  
Above the valleys of palm and pine.'

'Thither, O thither, love, let us go.'

'No, no, no!  
For in all that exquisite isle, my dear,  
There is but one bird with a musical  
throat,

And his compass is but of a single note,  
That it makes one weary to hear.'

'Mock me not! mock me not! love, let  
us go.'

'No, love, no.  
For the bud ever breaks into bloom on  
the tree,  
And a storm never wakes on the lonely  
sea,

And a worm is there in the lonely wood;  
That pierces the liver and blackens the  
blood;  
And makes it a sorrow to be.'

## CHILD-SONGS.

## I.

## THE CITY CHILD.

DAINTY little maiden, whither would you  
wander?

Whither from this pretty home, the  
home where mother dwells?

'Far and far away,' said the dainty little  
maiden,

'All among the gardens, auriculas,  
anemones,  
Roses and lilies and Canterbury-bells.'

Dainty little maiden, whither would you  
wander?

Whither from this pretty house, this  
city-house of ours?

'Far and far away,' said the dainty little  
maiden,

'All among the meadows, the clover and  
the clematis,  
Daisies and kingcups and honeysuckle-  
flowers.'

## II.

## MINNIE AND WINNIE.

MINNIE and Winnie  
Slept in a shell.  
Sleep, little ladies!  
And they slept well.

Pink was the shell within,  
Silver without;

Sounds of the great sea  
Wander'd about.

Sleep, little ladies!  
Wake not soon!  
Echo on echo  
Dies to the moon.

Two bright stars  
Peep'd into the shell.  
'What are they dreaming of?  
Who can tell?'

Started a green linnet  
Out of the croft;  
Wake, little ladies,  
The sun is aloft!

#### THE SPITEFUL LETTER.

HERE, it is here, the close of the year,  
And with it a spiteful letter.  
My name in song has done him much  
wrong,  
For himself has done much better.

O little bard, is your lot so hard,  
If men neglect your pages?  
I think not much of yours or of mine,  
I hear the roll of the ages.

Rhymes and rhymes in the range of the  
times!  
Are mine for the moment stronger?  
Yet hate me not, but abide your lot,  
I last but a moment longer.

This faded leaf, our names are as brief;  
What room is left for a hater?  
Yet the yellow leaf hates the greener  
leaf,  
For it hangs one moment later.

Greater than I—is that your cry?  
And men will live to see it.  
Well—if it be so—so it is, you know;  
And if it be so, so be it.

Brief, brief is a summer leaf,  
But this is the time of hollies.  
O hollies and ivies and evergreens,  
How I hate the spites and the follies!

#### LITERARY SQUABBLES.

AH God! the petty fools of rhyme  
That shriek and sweat in pigmy wars  
Before the stony face of Time,  
And look'd at by the silent stars:

Who hate each other for a song,  
And do their little best to bite  
And pinch their brethren in the throng,  
And scratch the very dead for spite:

And strain to make an inch of room  
For their sweet selves, and cannot hear  
The sullen Lethe rolling doom  
On them and theirs and all things here:

When one small touch of Charity  
Could lift them nearer God-like state  
Than if the crowded Orb should cry  
Like those who cried Diana great:

And I too, talk, and lose the touch  
I talk of. Surely, after all,  
The noblest answer unto such  
Is perfect stillness when they brawl.

#### THE VICTIM.

##### I.

A PLAGUE upon the people fell,  
A famine after laid them low,  
Then thorpe and byre arose in fire,  
For on them brake the sudden foe;  
So thick they died the people cried,  
'The Gods are moved against the land.'  
The Priest in horror about his altar  
To Thor and Odin lifted a hand:  
'Help us from famine  
And plague and strife!  
What would you have of us?  
Human life?  
Were it our nearest,  
Were it our dearest,  
(Answer, O answer)  
We give you his life.'

##### II.

But still the foeman spoil'd and burn'd,  
And cattle died, and deer in wood,  
And bird in air, and fishes turn'd  
And whiten'd all the rolling flood;

And dead men lay all over the way,  
Or down in a furrow scathed with  
flame:

And ever and aye the Priesthood moan'd,  
Till at last it seem'd that an answer  
came.

'The King is happy  
In child and wife;  
Take you his dearest,  
Give us a life.'

## III.

The Priest went out by heath and hill;

The King was hunting in the wild;

They found the mother sitting still;

She cast her arms about the child.

The child was only eight summers old,

His beauty still with his years in-  
creased,

His face was ruddy, his hair was gold,

He seem'd a victim due to the priest.

The Priest beheld him,

And cried with joy,

'The Gods have answer'd:

We give them the boy.'

## IV.

The King return'd from out the wild,

He bore but little game in hand;

The mother said, 'They have taken the  
child

To spill his blood and heal the land:

The land is sick, the people diseased,

And blight and famine on all the  
lea:

The holy Gods, they must be appeased,

So I pray you tell the truth to me.

They have taken our son,

They will have his life.

Is *he* your dearest?

Or I, the wife?'

## V.

The King bent low, with hand on brow,

He stay'd his arms upon his knee:

'O wife, what use to answer now?

For now the Priest has judged for me.'

The King was shaken with holy fear;

'The Gods,' he said, 'would have chosen  
well;

Yet both are near, and both are dear,

And which the dearest I cannot tell!'

But the Priest was happy,

His victim won:

'We have his dearest,

His only son!'

## VI.

The rites prepared, the victim bared,

The knife uprising toward the blow

To the altar-stone she sprang alone,

'Me, not my darling, no!'

He caught her away with a sudden cry;

Suddenly from him brake his wife,

And shrieking '*I am his dearest, I—*

*I am his dearest!*' rush'd on the  
knife.

And the Priest was happy,

'O, Father Odin,

We give you a life.

Which was his nearest?

Who was his dearest?

The Gods have answer'd;

We give them the wife!'

## WAGES.

GLORY of warrior, glory of orator, glory of song,

Paid with a voice flying by to be lost on an endless sea—

Glory of Virtue, to fight, to struggle, to right the wrong—

Nay, but she aim'd not at glory, no lover of glory she:

Give her the glory of going on, and still to be.

The wages of sin is death: if the wages of Virtue be dust,

Would she have heart to endure for the life of the worm and the fly?

She desires no isles of the blest, no quiet seats of the just,

To rest in a golden grove, or to bask in a summer sky:

Give her the wages of going on, and not to die.

## THE HIGHER PANTHEISM.

THE sun, the moon, the stars, the seas, the hills and the plains—  
Are not these, O Soul, the Vision of Him who reigns?

Is not the Vision He? tho' He be not that which He seems?  
Dreams are true while they last, and do we not live in dreams?

Earth, these solid stars, this weight of body and limb,  
Are they not sign and symbol of thy division from Him?

Dark is the world to thee: thyself art the reason why;  
For is He not all but that which has power to feel 'I am I'?

Glory about thee, without thee; and thou fulfillest thy doom  
Making Him broken gleams, and a stifled splendour and gloom.

Speak to Him thou for He hears, and Spirit with Spirit can meet—  
Closer is He than breathing, and nearer than hands and feet.

God is law, say the wise; O Soul, and let us rejoice,  
For if He thunder by law the thunder is yet His voice.

// Law is God, say some: no God at all, says the fool;  
For all we have power to see is a straight staff bent in a pool;

And the ear of man cannot hear, and the eye of man cannot see;  
But if we could see and hear, this Vision—were it not He?

## THE VOICE AND THE PEAK.

## I.

THE voice and the Peak  
Far over summit and lawn,  
The lone glow and long roar  
Green-rushing from the rosy thrones  
of dawn!

## II.

All night have I heard the voice  
Rave over the rocky bar,  
But thou wert silent in heaven,  
Above thee glided the star.

## III.

Hast thou no voice, O Peak,  
That standest high above all?  
'I am the voice of the Peak,'  
I roar and rave for I fall.

## IV.

'A thousand voices go  
To North, South, East, and West;  
They leave the heights and are troubled,  
And moan and sink to their rest.

## V.

'The fields are fair beside them,  
The chestnut towers in his bloom;  
But they—they feel the desire of the  
deep—  
Fall, and follow their doom.

## VI.

'The deep has power on the height,  
And the height has power on the  
deep;  
They are raised for ever and ever,  
And sink again into sleep.'



## VII.

Not raised for ever and ever,  
 But when their cycle is o'er,  
 The valley, the voice, the peak, the star  
 Pass, and are found no more.

## VIII.

The Peak is high and flush'd  
 At his highest with sunrise fire;  
 The Peak is high, and the stars are high,  
 And the thought of a man is higher.

## IX.

A deep below the deep,  
 And a height beyond the height!  
 Our hearing is not hearing,  
 And our seeing is not sight.

## X.

The voice and the Peak  
 Far into heaven withdrawn,  
 The lone glow and long roar  
 Green-rushing from the rosy thrones  
 of dawn!

FLOWER in the crannied wall,  
 I pluck you out of the crannies,

I hold you here, root and all, in my hand,  
 Little flower—but *if* I could understand  
 What you are, root and all, and all in all,  
 I should know what God and man is.

## A DEDICATION.

DEAR, near and true—no truer Time  
 himself  
 Can prove you, tho' he make you ever-  
 more  
 Dearer and nearer, as the rapid of life  
 Shoots to the fall—take this and pray  
 that he  
 Who wrote it, honouring your sweet faith  
 in him,  
 May trust himself; and after praise and  
 scorn,  
 As one who feels the immeasurable  
 world,  
 Attain the wise indifference of the wise;  
 And after Autumn past—if left to pass  
 His autumn into seeming-leafless days—  
 Draw toward the long frost and longest  
 night,  
 Wearing his wisdom lightly, like the  
 fruit  
 Which in our winter woodland looks a  
 flower.<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> The fruit of the Spindle-tree (*Euonymus  
 Europæus*).

## EXPERIMENTS.

## BOÄDICÉA.

WHILE about the shore of Mona those Neronian legionaries  
 Burnt and broke the grove and altar of the Druid and Druidess,  
 Far in the East Boädicéa, standing loftily charioted,  
 Mad and maddening all that heard her in her fierce volubility,  
 Girt by half the tribes of Britain, near the colony Cámulodúne,  
 Yell'd and shriek'd between her daughters o'er a wild confederacy.

'They that scorn the tribes and call us Britain's barbarous populaces,  
 Did they hear me, would they listen, did they pity me supplicating?  
 Shall I heed them in their anguish? shall I brook to be supplicated?  
 Hear Icenian, Catiuchlanian, hear Coritanian, Trinobant!  
 Must their ever-ravening eagle's beak and talon annihilate us?  
 Tear the noble heart of Britain, leave it gorily quivering?  
 Bark an answer, Britain's raven! bark and blacken innumerable,

Blacken round the Roman carrion, make the carcase a skeleton,  
 Kite and kestrel, wolf and wolfkin, from the wilderness, wallow in it,  
 Till the face of Bel be brighten'd, Taranis be propitiated.  
 Lo their colony half-defended! lo their colony, Cámulodúne!  
 There the horde of Roman robbers mock at a barbarous adversary.  
 There the hive of Roman liars worship an emperor-idiot.  
 Such is Rome, and this her deity: hear it, Spirit of Cássivĕlaún!

'Hear it, Gods! the Gods have heard it, O Icenian, O Coritanian!  
 Doubt not ye the Gods have answer'd, Catiuechlanian, Trinobant.  
 These have told us all their anger in miraculous utterances,  
 Thunder, a flying fire in heaven, a murmur heard aërially,  
 Phantom sound of blows descending, moan of an enemy massacred,  
 Phantom wail of women and children, multitudinous agonies.  
 Bloodily flow'd the Tamesa rolling phantom bodies of horses and men;  
 Then a phantom colony smoulder'd on the reflux estuary;  
 Lastly yonder yester-even, suddenly giddily tottering —  
 There was one who watch'd and told me — down their statue of Victory fell.  
 Lo their precious Roman bantling, lo the colony Cámulodúne,  
 Shall we teach it a Roman lesson? shall we care to be pitiful?  
 Shall we deal with it as an infant? shall we dandle it amorously?

'Hear Icenian, Catiuechlanian, hear Coritanian, Trinobant!  
 While I roved about the forest, long and bitterly meditating,  
 There I heard them in the darkness, at the mystical ceremony,  
 Loosely robed in flying raiment, sang the terrible prophetesses,  
 "Fear not, isle of blowing woodland, isle of silvery parapets!  
 Tho' the Román eagle shadow thee, tho' the gathering enemy narrow thee,  
 Thou shalt wax and he shall dwindle, thou shalt be the mighty one yet!  
 Thine the liberty, thine the glory, thine the deeds to be celebrated,  
 Thine the myriad-rolling ocean, light and shadow illimitable,  
 Thine the lands of lasting summer, many-blossoming Paradises,  
 Thine the North and thine the South and thine the battle-thunder of God,"  
 So they chanted: how shall Britain light upon auguries happier?  
 So they chanted in the darkness, and there cometh a victory now.

'Hear Icenian, Catiuechlanian, hear Coritanian, Trinobant!  
 Me the wife of rich Prasútagus, me the lover of liberty,  
 Me they seized and me they tortured, me they lash'd and humiliated,  
 Me the sport of ribald Veterans, mine of ruffian violators!  
 See they sit, they hide their faces, miserable in ignominy!  
 Wherefore in me burns an anger, not by blood to be satiated.  
 Lo the palaces and the temple, lo the colony Cámulodúne!  
 There they ruled, and thence they wasted all the flourishing territory,  
 Thither at their will they haled the yellow-ringed Britoness —  
 Bloodily, bloodily fall the battle-axe, unexhausted, inexorable.  
 Shout Icenian, Catiuechlanian, shout Coritanian, Trinobant,  
 Till the victim hear within and yearn to hurry precipitously  
 Like the leaf in a roaring whirlwind, like the smoke in a hurricane whirl'd.  
 Lo the colony, there they rioted in the city of Cánobelne!  
 There they drank in cups of emerald, there at tables of ebony lay,  
 Rolling on their purple couches in their tender effeminacy.  
 There they dwelt and there they rioted; there — there — they dwell no more.

Burst the gates, and burn the palaces, break the works of the statuary,  
 Take the hoary Roman head and shatter it, hold it abominable,  
 Cut the Roman boy to pieces in his lust and voluptuousness,  
 Lash the maiden into swooning, me they lash'd and humiliated,  
 Chop the breasts from off the mother, dash the brains of the little one out,  
 Up my Britons, on my chariot, on my chargers, trample them under us.'

So the Queen Boädicéa, standing loftily charioted,  
 Brandishing in her hand a dart and rolling glances lioness-like,  
 Yell'd and shriek'd between her daughters in her fierce volubility.  
 Till her people all around the royal chariot agitated,  
 Madly dash'd the darts together, writhing barbarous lineaments,  
 Made the noise of frosty woodlands, when they shiver in January,  
 Roar'd as when the roaring breakers boom and blanch on the precipices,  
 Yell'd as when the winds of winter tear an oak on a promontory.  
 So the silent colony hearing her tumultuous adversaries  
 Clash the darts and on the buckler beat with rapid unanimous hand,  
 Thought on all her evil tyrannies, all her pitiless avarice,  
 Till she felt the heart within her fall and flutter tremulously,  
 Then her pulses at the clamouring of her enemy fainted away.  
 Out of evil evil flourishes, out of tyranny tyranny buds.  
 Ran the land with Roman slaughter, multitudinous agonies.  
 Perish'd many a maid and matron, many a valorous legionary,  
 Fell the colony, city, and citadel, London, Verulam, Cāmulođúne.

## IN QUANTITY.

## ON TRANSLATIONS OF HOMER.

*Hexameters and Pentameters.*

THESE lame hexameters the strong-wing'd music of Homer!  
 No—but a most burlesque barbarous experiment.  
 When was a harsher sound ever heard, ye Muses, in England?  
 When did a frog coarser croak upon our Helicon?  
 Hexameters no worse than daring Germany gave us,  
 Barbarous experiment, barbarous hexameters.

## MILTON.

*Alcaics.*

O MIGHTY-MOUTH'D inventor of harmonies,  
 O skill'd to sing of Time or Eternity,  
 God-gifted organ-voice of England,  
 Milton, a name to resound for ages;  
 Whose Titan angels, Gabriel, Abdiel,  
 Starr'd from Jehovah's gorgeous armouries,

Tower, as the deep-domed empyrēan  
 Rings to the roar of an angel onset—  
 Me rather all that bowery loneliness,  
 The brooks of Eden mazily murmuring,  
 And bloom profuse and cedar arches  
 Charm, as a wanderer out in ocean,  
 Where some refulgent sunset of India  
 Streams o'er a rich ambrosial ocean isle,  
 And crimson-hued the stately palm-woods  
 Whisper in odorous heights of even.

*Hendecasyllabics.*

O you chorus of indolent reviewers,  
 Irresponsible, indolent reviewers,  
 Look, I come to the test, a tiny poem  
 All composed in a metre of Catullus,  
 All in quantity, careful of my motion,  
 Like the skater on ice that hardly bears  
 him,

Lest I fall unawares before the people,  
 Waking laughter in indolent reviewers.  
 Should I flounder awhile without a tumble  
 Thro' this metrification of Catullus,  
 They should speak to me not without a  
 welcome,

All that chorus of indolent reviewers.  
 Hard, hard, hard is it, only not to  
 tumble,

So fantastical is the dainty metre.  
 Wherefore slight me not wholly, nor  
 believe me

Too presumptuous, indolent reviewers.  
 O blatant Magazines, regard me rather —  
 Since I blush to belaud myself a moment —

As some rare little rose, a piece of inmost  
 Horticultural art, or half coquette-like  
 Maiden, not to be greeted unbenignly.

SPECIMEN OF A TRANSLATION  
 OF THE ILIAD IN BLANK  
 VERSE.

So Hector spake; the Trojans roar'd  
 applause;  
 Then loosed their sweating horses from  
 the yoke,

And each beside his chariot bound his  
 own;

And oxen from the city, and goodly  
 sheep

In haste they drove, and honey-hearted  
 wine

And bread from out the houses brought,  
 and heap'd

Their firewood, and the winds from off  
 the plain

Roll'd the rich vapour far into the  
 heaven.

And these all night upon the bridge<sup>1</sup> of  
 war

Sat glorying; many a fire before them  
 blazed:

As when in heaven the stars about the  
 moon

Look beautiful, when all the winds are  
 laid,

And every height comes out, and jutting  
 peak

And valley, and the immeasurable heavens  
 Break open to their highest, and all the  
 stars

Shine, and the Shepherd gladdens in his  
 heart:

So many a fire between the ships and  
 stream

Of Xanthus blazed before the towers of  
 Troy,

A thousand on the plain; and close by  
 each

Sat fifty in the blaze of burning fire;  
 And eating hoary grain and pulse the  
 steeds,

Fixt by their cars, waited the golden  
 dawn.

*Iliad* VIII. 542-561.

<sup>1</sup> Or, ridge.

## THE WINDOW;

## OR, THE SONG OF THE WRENS.

FOUR years ago Mr. Sullivan requested me to write a little song-cycle, German fashion, for him to exercise his art upon. He had been very successful in setting such old songs as 'Orpheus with his lute,' and I drest up for him, partly in the old style, a puppet, whose almost only merit is, perhaps, that it can dance to Mr. Sullivan's instrument. I am sorry that my four-year-old puppet should have to dance at all in the dark shadow of these days; but the music is now completed, and I am bound by my promise.

December, 1870.

A. TENNYSON.

## THE WINDOW.

## ON THE HILL.

THE lights and shadows fly!  
Yonder it brightens and darkens down  
on the plain.

A jewel, a jewel dear to a lover's  
eye!

Oh is it the brook, or a pool, or her  
window-pane,  
When the winds are up in the  
morning?

Clouds that are racing above,  
And winds and lights and shadows that  
cannot be still,

All running on one way to the home  
of my love,

You are all running on, and I stand on  
the slope of the hill,  
And the winds are up in the morn-  
ing!

Follow, follow the chase!  
And my thoughts are as quick and as  
quick, ever on, on, on.

O lights, are you flying over her sweet  
little face?

And my heart is there before you are  
come, and gone,  
When the winds are up in the  
morning!

Follow them down the slope!  
And I follow them down to the window-  
pane of my dear,

And it brightens and darkens and  
brightens like my hope,

And it darkens and brightens and darkens  
like my fear,

And the winds are up in the  
morning.

## AT THE WINDOW.

Vine, vine and eglantine,  
Clasp her window, trail and twine!  
Rose, rose and clematis,  
Trail and twine and clasp and kiss,  
Kiss, kiss; and make her a bower  
All of flowers, and drop me a flower,  
Drop me a flower.

Vine, vine and eglantine,  
Cannot a flower, a flower, be mine?  
Rose, rose and clematis,  
Drop me a flower, a flower, to kiss,  
Kiss, kiss — and out of her bower  
All of flowers, a flower, a flower,  
Dropt, a flower.

## GONE.

Gone!  
Gone, till the end of the year,  
Gone, and the light gone with her, and  
left me in shadow here!

Gone — flitted away,  
Taken the stars from the night and the  
sun from the day!

Gone, and a cloud in my heart, and a  
storm in the air!

Flown to the east or the west, flitted I  
know not where!

Down in the south is a flash and a groan:  
she is there! she is there!

## WINTER.

The frost is here,  
And fuel is dear,  
And woods are sear,  
And fires burn clear,  
And frost is here  
And has bitten the heel of the going year.

Bite, frost, bite!  
 You roll up away from the light  
 The blue wood-louse, and the plump  
   dormouse,  
 And the bees are still'd, and the flies are  
   kill'd,  
 And you bite far into the heart of the  
   house,  
 But not into mine.

Bite, frost, bite!  
 The woods are all the searer,  
 The fuel is all the dearer,  
 The fires are all the clearer,  
 My spring is all the nearer,  
 You have bitten into the heart of the  
   earth,  
 But not into mine.

## SPRING.

Birds' love and birds' song  
 Flying here and there,  
 Birds' song and birds' love,  
 And you with gold for hair!  
 Birds' song and birds' love,  
 Passing with the weather,  
 Men's song and men's love,  
 To love once and for ever.

Men's love and birds' love,  
 And women's love and men's!  
 And you my wren with a crown of gold,  
 You my queen of the wrens!  
 You the queen of the wrens—  
 We'll be birds of a feather,  
 I'll be King of the Queen of the wrens,  
 And all in a nest together.

## THE LETTER.

Where is another sweet as my sweet,  
 Fine of the fine, and shy of the shy?  
 Fine little hands, fine little feet—  
   Dewy blue eye.  
 Shall I write to her? shall I go?  
 Ask her to marry me by and by?  
 Somebody said that she'd say no;  
 Somebody knows that she'll say ay!

Ay or no, if ask'd to her face?  
 Ay or no, from shy of the shy?  
 Go, little letter, apace, apace,  
   Fly;

Fly to the light in the valley below—  
 Tell my wish to her dewy blue eye:  
 Somebody said that she'd say no;  
 Somebody knows that she'll say ay!

## NO ANSWER.

The mist and the rain, the mist and the  
   rain!

Is it ay or no? is it ay or no?  
 And never a glimpse of her window-pane!  
 And I may die but the grass will grow,  
 And the grass will grow when I am gone,  
 And the wet west wind and the world  
   will go on.

Ay is the song of the wedded spheres,  
 No is trouble and cloud and storm,  
 Ay is life for a hundred years,  
 No will push me down to the worm,  
 And when I am there and dead and gone,  
 The wet west wind and the world will  
   go on.

The wind and the wet, the wind and the  
   wet!

Wet west wind how you blow, you blow!  
 And never a line from my lady yet!  
 Is it ay or no? is it ay or no?  
 Blow then, blow, and when I am gone,  
 The wet west wind and the world may  
   go on.

## NO ANSWER.

Winds are loud and you are dumb,  
 Take my love, for love will come,  
   Love will come but once a life.  
 Winds are loud and winds will pass!  
 Spring is here with leaf and grass:  
   Take my love and be my wife.  
 After-loves of maids and men  
 Are but dainties drest again:  
 Love me now, you'll love me then:  
   Love can love but once a life.

## THE ANSWER.

Two little hands that meet,  
 Claspt on her seal, my sweet!  
 Must I take you and break you,  
 Two little hands that meet?  
 I must take you, and break you,  
 And loving hands must part—



Take, take — break, break —  
 Break — you may break my heart.  
 Faint heart never won —  
 Break, break, and all's done.

AY.

Be merry, all birds, to-day,  
 Be merry on earth as you never were  
 merry before,  
 Be merry in heaven, O larks, and far  
 away,  
 And merry for ever and ever, and one  
 day more.

Why?

For it's easy to find a rhyme.

Look, look, how he flits,  
 The fire-crown'd king of the wrens,  
 from out of the pine!  
 Look how they tumble the blossom, the  
 mad little tits!  
 'Cuck-oo! Cuck-oo!' was ever a May  
 so fine?

Why?

For it's easy to find a rhyme.

O merry the linnet and dove,  
 And swallow and sparrow and throstle,  
 and have your desire!  
 O merry my heart, you have gotten the  
 wings of love,  
 And fit like the king of the wrens with  
 a crown of fire.

Why?

For it's ay ay, ay ay.

WHEN.

Sun comes, moon comes,  
 Time slips away.  
 Sun sets, moon sets,  
 Love, fix a day.

'A year hence, a year hence.'  
 'We shall both be gray.'  
 'A month hence, a month hence.'  
 'Far, far away.'

'A week hence, a week hence.'  
 'Ah, the long delay.'  
 'Wait a little, wait a little,  
 You shall fix a day.'

'To-morrow, love, to-morrow,  
 And that's an age away.'  
 Blaze upon her window, sun,  
 And honour all the day.

MARRIAGE MORNING.

Light, so low upon earth,  
 You send a flash to the sun.  
 Here is the golden close of love,  
 All my wooing is done.  
 Oh, the woods and the meadows,  
 Woods where we hid from the wet,  
 Stiles where we stay'd to be kind,  
 Meadows in which we met!

Light, so low in the vale  
 You flash and lighten afar,  
 For this is the golden morning of love,  
 And you are his morning star.  
 Flash, I am coming, I come,  
 By meadow and stile and wood,  
 Oh, lighten into my eyes and my heart,  
 Into my heart and my blood!

Heart, are you great enough  
 For a love that never tires?  
 O heart, are you great enough for love?  
 I have heard of thorns and briars.  
 Over the thorns and briars,  
 Over the meadows and stiles,  
 Over the world to the end of it  
 Flash for a million miles.

## IN MEMORIAM A. H. H.

OBIIT MDCCCXXXIII.

STRONG Son of God, immortal Love,  
 Whom we, that have not seen thy  
 face,  
 By faith, and faith alone, embrace,  
 Believing where we cannot prove;

Thine are these orbs of light and shade;  
 Thou madest Life in man and brute;  
 Thou madest Death; and lo, thy  
 foot  
 Is on the skull which thou hast made.

R

1-8 59-71

9-20 72-98

21-27 99-103

On Miss. of. Mariana  
 ll. 4-5 2nd & 3rd ind  
 l. 8. 2lho stanza ll. 4-5.

Thou wilt not leave us in the dust :  
 Thou madest man, he knows not  
 why,  
 He thinks he was not made to die;  
 And thou hast made him : thou art just.

Thou seemest human and divine,  
 The highest, holiest manhood, thou :  
 Our wills are ours, we know not  
 how;  
 Our wills are ours, to make them thine.

Our little systems have their day;  
 They have their day and cease to be :  
 They are but broken lights of thee,  
 And thou, O Lord, art more than they.

We have but faith : we cannot know;  
 For knowledge is of things we see;  
 And yet we trust it comes from thee,  
 A beam in darkness : let it grow.

Let knowledge grow from more to more,  
 But more of reverence in us dwell;  
 That mind and soul, according well,  
 May make one music as before,

But vaster. We are fools and slight;  
 We mock thee when we do not fear :  
 But help thy foolish ones to bear;  
 Help thy vain worlds to bear thy light.

Forgive what seem'd my sin in me;  
 What seem'd my worth since I  
 began;  
 For merit lives from man to man,  
 And not from man, O Lord, to thee.

Forgive my grief for one removed,  
 Thy creature, whom I found so fair.  
 I trust he lives in thee, and there  
 I find him worthier to be loved.

Forgive these wild and wandering cries,  
 Confusions of a wasted youth;  
 Forgive them where they fail in truth,  
 And in thy wisdom make me wise.

I.

1849.

I HELD it truth, with him who sings  
 To one clear harp in divers tones,  
 That men may rise on stepping-stones  
 Of their dead selves to higher things.

But who shall so forecast the years  
 And find in loss a gain to match?  
 Or reach a hand thro' time to catch  
 The far-off interest of tears?

Let Love clasp Grief lest both be drown'd,  
 Let darkness keep her raven gloss :—  
 Ah, sweeter to be drunk with loss,  
 To dance with death, to beat the ground,

Than that the victor Hours should scorn  
 The long result of Love, and boast,  
 'Behold the man that loved and  
 lost,  
 But all he was is overworn.'

II.

Old Yew, which graspest at the stones  
 That name the under-lying dead,  
 Thy fibres net the dreamless head,  
 Thy roots are wrapt about the bones.

The seasons bring the flower again,  
 And bring the firstling to the flock;  
 And in the dusk of thee, the clock  
 Beats out the little lives of men.

O not for thee the glow, the bloom,  
 Who changest not in any gale,  
 Nor branding summer suns avail  
 To touch thy thousand years of gloom :

And gazing on thee, sullen tree,  
 Sick for thy stubborn hardihood,  
 I seem to fail from out my blood  
 And grow incorporate into thee.

III.

O Sorrow, cruel fellowship,  
 O Priestess in the vaults of Death,  
 O sweet and bitter in a breath,  
 What whispers from thy lying lip?

'The stars,' she whispers, 'blindly run;  
 A web is wov'n across the sky;  
 From out waste places comes a cry,  
 And murmurs from the dying sun :

'And all the phantom, Nature, stands—  
 With all the music in her tone,  
 A hollow echo of my own, —  
 A hollow form with empty hands.'

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Part I. - 9-17 Ship  
 II. - 22-23 Retrospect  
 III. - 25-30 Church  
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 V. - 40-47 300  
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And shall I take a thing so blind,  
Embrace her as my natural good;  
Or crush her, like a vice of blood,  
Upon the threshold of the mind?

IV.

To Sleep I give my powers away;  
My will is bondsman to the dark;  
I sit within a helmless bark,  
And with my heart I muse and say:

O heart, how fares it with thee now,  
That thou should'st fail from thy  
desire,  
Who scarcely darest to inquire,  
'What is it makes me beat so low?'

Something it is which thou hast lost,  
Some pleasure from thine early years.  
Break, thou deep vase of chilling  
tears,  
That grief hath shaken into frost!

Such clouds of nameless trouble cross  
All night below the darken'd eyes;  
With morning wakes the will, and  
cries,  
'Thou shalt not be the fool of loss.'

V.

I sometimes hold it half a sin  
To put in words the grief I feel;  
For words, like Nature, half reveal  
And half conceal the Soul within.

But, for the unquiet heart and brain,  
A use in measured language lies;  
The sad mechanic exercise,  
Like dull narcotics, numbing pain.

In words, like weeds, I'll wrap me o'er,  
Like coarsest clothes against the  
cold:  
But that large grief which these  
enfold  
Is given in outline and no more.

VI.

One writes, that 'Other friends remain,'  
That 'Loss is common to the race'—  
And common is the commonplace,  
And vacant chaff well meant for grain.

That loss is common would not make  
My own less bitter, rather more:  
Too common! Never morning wore  
To evening, but some heart did break.

O father, wheresoe'er thou be,  
Who pledgedst now thy gallant son;  
A shot, ere half thy draught be done,  
Hath still'd the life that beat from thee.

O mother, praying God will save  
Thy sailor, — while thy head is bow'd,  
His heavy-shotted hammock-shroud  
Drops in his vast and wandering grave.

Ye know no more than I who wrought  
At that last hour to please him well—  
Who mused on all I had to tell,  
And something written, something  
thought;

Expecting still his advent home;  
And ever met him on his way  
With wishes, thinking, 'here to-day,'  
Or 'here to-morrow will he come.'

O somewhere, meek, unconscious dove,  
That sittest ranging golden hair;  
And glad to find thyself so fair,  
Poor child, that waitest for thy love!

For now her father's chimney glows  
In expectation of a guest;  
And thinking, 'this will please him  
best,'  
She takes a riband or a rose;

For he will see them on to-night;  
And with the thought her colour  
burns;  
And, having left the glass, she turns  
Once more to set a ringlet right;

And, even when she turn'd, the curse  
Had fallen, and her future Lord  
Was drown'd in passing thro' the  
ford,  
Or kill'd in falling from his horse.

O what to her shall be the end?  
And what to me remains of good?  
To her, perpetual maidenhood,  
And unto me no second friend.

Richard P. 1. 11. 37.  
but still the common  
Kiss

ship's years

in immortality.

Pt III } 79-89 (no group) retrospection. new  
90-93 Contact of living & dead.  
100-103 Poet's farewell to childhood

## VII.

Dark house, by which once more I stand  
Here in the long unlovely street,  
Doors, where my heart was used to  
beat  
So quickly, waiting for a hand,

A hand that can be clasp'd no more —  
Behold me, for I cannot sleep,  
And like a guilty thing I creep  
At earliest morning to the door.

He is not here; but far away  
The noise of life begins again,  
And ghostly thro' the drizzling rain  
On the bald street breaks the blank  
day.

## VIII.

A happy lover who has come  
To look on her that loves him well,  
Who 'lights and rings the gateway  
bell,  
And learns her gone and far from home;

He saddens, all the magic light  
Dies off at once from bower and  
hall,  
And all the place is dark, and all  
The chambers "emptied of delight:"

So find I every pleasant spot  
In which we two were wont to  
meet,  
The field, the chamber and the  
street,  
For all is dark where thou art not.

Yet as that other, wandering there  
In those deserted walks, may find  
A flower beat with rain and wind,  
Which once she foster'd up with care;

So seems it in my deep regret,  
O my forsaken heart, with thee  
And this poor flower of poesy  
Which little cared for fades not yet.

— But since it pleased a vanish'd eye,  
I go to plant it on his tomb,  
That if it can it there may bloom,  
Or dying, there at least may die.

## IX.

Fair ship, that from the Italian shore  
Sail'st the placid ocean-plains  
With my lost Arthur's loved re-  
mains,  
Spread thy full wings, and waft him o'er.

So draw him home to those that mourn  
In vain; a favourable speed  
Ruffle thy mirror'd mast, and lead  
Thro' prosperous floods his holy urn.

All night no ruder air perplex  
Thy sliding keel, till Phosphor, bright  
As our pure love, thro' early light  
Shall glimmer on the dewy decks.

Sphere all your lights around, above;  
Sleep, gentle heavens, before the  
prow;  
Sleep, gentle winds, as he sleeps  
now,

My friend, the brother of my love;

My Arthur, whom I shall not see  
Till all my widow'd race be run;  
Dear as the mother to the son,  
More than my brothers are to me.

## X.

I hear the noise about thy keel;  
I hear the bell struck in the night:  
I see the cabin-window bright;  
I see the sailor at the wheel.

Thou bring'st the sailor to his wife,  
And travell'd men from foreign  
lands;  
And letters unto trembling hands;  
And, thy dark freight, a vanish'd life.

So bring him: we have idle dreams:  
This look of quiet flatters thus  
Our home-bred fancies: O to us,  
The fools of habit, sweeter seems

To rest beneath the clover sod,  
That takes the sunshine and the  
rains,  
Or where the kneeling hamlet drains  
The chalice of the grapes of God;

Than if with thee the roaring wells  
Should gulf him fathom-deep in  
brine;  
And hands so often clasp'd in mine,  
Should toss with tangle and with shells.

## XI.

Calm is the morn without a sound,  
Calm as to suit a calmer grief,  
And only thro' the faded leaf  
The chestnut pattering to the ground :

Calm and deep peace on this high wold,  
And on these dews that drench the  
furze,  
And all the silvery gossamers  
That twinkle into green and gold :

Calm and still light on yon great plain  
That sweeps with all its autumn  
bowers,  
And crowded farms and lessening  
towers,  
To mingle with the bounding main :

Calm and deep peace in this wide air,  
These leaves that redden to the fall;  
And in my heart, if calm at all,  
If any calm, a calm despair :

Calm on the seas, and silver sleep,  
And waves that sway themselves in  
rest,  
And dead calm in that noble breast  
Which heaves but with the heaving deep.

## XII.

Lo, as a dove when up she springs  
To bear thro' Heaven a tale of woe,  
Some dolorous message knit below  
The wild pulsation of her wings;

Like her I go; I cannot stay;  
I leave this mortal ark behind,  
A weight of nerves without a mind,  
And leave the cliffs, and haste away

O'er ocean-mirrors rounded large,  
And reach the glow of southern  
skies,  
And see the sails at distance rise,  
And linger weeping on the marge,

And saying: 'Comes he thus, my friend?  
Is this the end of all my care?'  
And circle moaning in the air:  
'Is this the end? Is this the end?'

And forward dart again, and play  
About the prow, and back return  
To where the body sits, and learn  
That I have been an hour away.

## XIII.

Tears of the widower, when he sees  
A late-lost form that sleep reveals,  
And moves his doubtful arms, and  
feels  
Her place is empty, fall like these;

Which weep a loss for ever new,  
A void where heart on heart reposed;  
And, where warm hands have prest  
and closed,  
Silence, till I be silent too.

Which weep the comrade of my choice,  
An awful thought, a life removed,  
The human-hearted man I loved,  
A Spirit, not a breathing voice.

Come Time, and teach me, many years,  
I do not suffer in a dream;  
For now so strange do these things  
seem,  
Mine eyes have leisure for their tears;

My fancies time to rise on wing,  
And glance about the approaching  
sails,  
As tho' they brought but merchants'  
bales,  
And not the burthen that they bring.

## XIV.

If one should bring me this report,  
That thou hadst touch'd the land  
to-day,  
And I went down unto the quay,  
And found thee lying in the port;

And standing, muffled round with woe,  
Should see thy passengers in rank  
Come stepping lightly down the  
plank,  
And beckoning unto those they know;

And if along with these should come  
The man I held as half-divine;  
Should strike a sudden hand in mine,  
And ask a thousand things of home;

And I should tell him all my pain,  
And how my life had droop'd of late,  
And he should sorrow o'er my state  
And marvel what possess'd my brain;

And I perceived no touch of change,  
No hint of death in all his frame,  
But found him all in all the same,  
I should not feel it to be strange.

## XV.

To-night the winds begin to rise  
And roar from yonder dropping day:  
The last red leaf is whirl'd away,  
The rooks are blown about the skies;

The forest crack'd, the waters curl'd,  
The cattle huddled on the lea;  
And wildly dash'd on tower and tree  
The sunbeam strikes along the world:

And but for fancies, which aver  
That all thy motions gently pass  
Athwart a plane of molten glass,  
I scarce could brook the strain and stir

That makes the barren branches loud;  
And but for fear it is not so,  
The wild unrest that lives in woe  
Would dote and pore on yonder cloud

That rises upward always higher,  
And onward drags a labouring breast,  
And topples round the dreary west,  
A looming bastion fringed with fire.

## XVI.

What words are these have fall'n from me?  
Can calm despair and wild unrest  
Be tenants of a single breast,  
Or sorrow such a changeling be?

Or doth she only seem to take  
The touch of change in calm or  
storm;  
But knows no more of transient form  
In her deep self, than some dead lake

That holds the shadow of a lark  
Hung in the shadow of a heaven?  
Or has the shock, so harshly given,  
Confused me like the unhappy bark

That strikes by night a craggy shelf,  
And staggers blindly ere she sink?  
And stunn'd me from my power to  
think  
And all my knowledge of myself;

And made me that delirious man  
Whose fancy fuses old and new,  
And flashes into false and true,  
And mingles all without a plan?

## XVII.

Thou comest, much wept for: such a  
breeze  
Compell'd thy canvas, and my prayer  
Was as the whisper of an air  
To breathe thee over lonely seas.

For I in spirit saw thee move  
Thro' circles of the bounding sky,  
Week after week: the days go by:  
Come quick, thou bringest all I love.

Henceforth, wherever thou may'st roam,  
My blessing, like a line of light,  
Is on the waters day and night,  
And like a beacon guards thee home.

So may whatever tempest mars  
Mid-ocean, spare thee, sacred bark;  
And balmy drops in summer dark  
Slide from the bosom of the stars.

So kind an office hath been done,  
Such precious relics brought by thee;  
The dust of him I shall not see  
Till all my widow'd race be run.

## XVIII.

'Tis well; 'tis something; we may stand  
Where he in English earth is laid,  
And from his ashes may be made  
The violet of his native land.

'Tis little; but it looks in truth  
As if the quiet bones were blest  
Among familiar names to rest  
And in the places of his youth.



Come then, pure hands, and bear the  
head  
That sleeps or wears the mask of  
sleep,  
And come, whatever loves to weep,  
And hear the ritual of the dead.

Ah yet, ev'n yet, if this might be,  
I, falling on his faithful heart,  
Would breathing thro' his lips im-  
part  
The life that almost dies in me;

That dies not, but endures with pain,  
And slowly forms the firmer mind,  
Treasuring the look it cannot find,  
The words that are not heard again.

## XIX.

The Danube to the Severn gave  
The darken'd heart that beat no  
more;  
They laid him by the pleasant shore,  
And in the hearing of the wave.

There twice a day the Severn fills;  
The salt sea-water passes by,  
And hushes half the babbling Wye,  
And makes a silence in the hills.

The Wye is hush'd nor moved along,  
And hush'd my deepest grief of all,  
When fill'd with tears that cannot  
fall,  
I brim with sorrow drowning song.

The tide flows down, the wave again  
Is vocal in its wooded walls;  
My deeper anguish also falls,  
And I can speak a little then.

## XX.

The lesser griefs that may be said,  
That breathe a thousand tender vows,  
Are but as servants in a house  
Where lies the master newly dead;

Who speak their feeling as it is,  
And weep the fulness from the  
mind:  
'It will be hard,' they say, 'to find  
Another service such as this.'

My lighter moods are like to these,  
That out of words a comfort win;  
But there are other griefs within,  
And tears that at their fountain freeze;

For by the hearth the children sit  
Cold in that atmosphere of Death,  
And scarce endure to draw the  
breath,  
Or like to noiseless phantoms fit:

But open converse is there none,  
So much the vital spirits sink  
To see the vacant chair, and think,  
'How good! how kind! and he is  
gone.'

## XXI.

I sing to him that rests below,  
And, since the grasses round me  
wave,  
I take the grasses of the grave,  
And make them pipes whereon to blow.

The traveller hears me now and then,  
And sometimes harshly will he  
speak:  
'This fellow would make weakness  
weak,  
And melt the waxen hearts of men.'

Another answers, 'Let him be,  
He loves to make parade of pain,  
That with his piping he may gain  
The praise that comes to constancy.'

A third is wroth: 'Is this an hour  
For private sorrow's barren song,  
When more and more the people  
throng  
The chairs and thrones of civil power?

'A time to sicken and to swoon,  
When Science reaches forth her  
arms  
To feel from world to world, and  
charms  
Her secret from the latest moon?'

Behold, ye speak an idle thing:  
Ye never knew the sacred dust:  
I do but sing because I must,  
And pipe but as the linnets sing:

And one is glad; her note is gay,  
 For now her little ones have ranged;  
 And one is sad; her note is changed,  
 Because her brood is stol'n away.

XXII. - ११५.

The path by which we twain did go,  
 Which led by tracts that pleased us  
 well,  
 Thro' four sweet years arose and fell,  
 From flower to flower, from snow to snow :

And we with singing cheer'd the way,  
 And, crown'd with all the season  
 lent,  
 From April on to April went,  
 And glad at heart from May to May :

But where the path we walk'd began  
 To slant the fifth autumnal slope,  
 As we descended following Hope  
 There sat the Shadow fear'd of man;

Who broke our fair companionship,  
 And spread his mantle dark and  
 cold,  
 And wrapt thee formless in the fold,  
 And dull'd the murmur on thy lip,

And bore thee where I could not see  
 Nor follow, tho' I walk in haste,  
 And think, that somewhere in the  
 waste  
 The Shadow sits and waits for me.

XXIII.

Now, sometimes in my sorrow shut,  
 Or breaking into song by fits,  
 Alone, alone, to where he sits,  
 The Shadow cloak'd from head to foot,

Who keeps the keys of all the creeds,  
 I wander, often falling lame,  
 And looking back to whence I came,  
 Or on to where the pathway leads;

And crying, How changed from where it  
 ran  
 Thro' lands where not a leaf was  
 dumb;  
 But all the lavish hills would hum  
 The murmur of a happy Pan :

When each by turns was guide to each,  
 And Fancy light from Fancy  
 caught,  
 And Thought leapt out to wed with  
 Thought  
 Ere Thought could wed itself with  
 Speech;

And all we met was fair and good,  
 And all was good that Time could  
 bring,  
 And all the secret of the Spring  
 Moved in the chambers of the blood;

And many an old philosophy  
 On Argive heights divinely sang,  
 And round us all the thicket rang  
 To many a flute of Arcady.

XXIV.

And was the day of my delight  
 As pure and perfect as I say?  
 The very source and fount of Day  
 Is dash'd with wandering isles of night.

If all was good and fair we met,  
 This earth had been the Paradise  
 It never look'd to human eyes  
 Since our first Sun arose and set.

And is it that the haze of grief  
 Makes former gladness loom so  
 great?  
 The lowness of the present state,  
 That sets the past in this relief?

Or that the past will always win  
 A glory from its being far;  
 And orb into the perfect star  
 We saw not, when we moved therein?

XXV.

I know that this was Life, — the track  
 Whereon with equal feet we fared;  
 And then, as now, the day pre-  
 pared  
 The daily burden for the back.

But this it was that made me move  
 As light as carrier-birds in air;  
 I loved the weight I had to bear,  
 Because it needed help of Love :

Nor could I weary, heart or limb,  
 When mighty Love would cleave in  
 twain  
 The lading of a single pain,  
 And part it, giving half to him.

XXVI. *anf*

Still onward winds the dreary way;  
 I with it; for I long to prove  
 No lapse of moons can canker  
 Love,  
 Whatever fickle tongues may say.

And if that eye which watches guilt  
 And goodness, and hath power to  
 see  
 Withip the green the moulder'd  
 tree,

And towers fall'n as soon as built —

Oh, if indeed that eye foresee  
 Or see (in Him is no before)  
 In more of life true life no more  
 And Love the indifference to be,

Then might I find, ere yet the morn  
 Breaks hither over Indian seas,  
 That Shadow waiting with the  
 keys,

To shroud me from my proper scorn.

## XXVII.

I envy not in any moods  
 The captive void of noble rage,  
 The linnet born within the cage,  
 That never knew the summer woods:

I envy not the beast that takes  
 His license in the field of time,  
 Unfetter'd by the sense of crime,  
 To whom a conscience never wakes;

Nor, what may count itself as blest,  
 The heart that never plighted troth  
 But stagnates in the weeds of  
 sloth;

Nor any want-begotten rest.

I hold it true, whate'er befall;  
 I feel it, when I sorrow most;  
 'Tis better to have loved and lost  
 Than never to have loved at all.

## XXVIII.

The time draws near the birth of Christ:  
 The moon is hid; the night is still;  
 The Christmas bells from hill to hill  
 Answer each other in the mist.

Four voices of four hamlets round,  
 From far and near, on mead and  
 moor,  
 Swell out and fail, as if a door  
 Were shut between me and the sound:

Each voice four changes on the wind,  
 That now dilate, and now decrease,  
 Peace and goodwill, goodwill and  
 peace,  
 Peace and goodwill, to all mankind.

This year I slept and woke with pain,  
 I almost wish'd no more to wake,  
 And that my hold on life would break  
 Before I heard those bells again:

But they my troubled spirit rule,  
 For they controll'd me when a boy;  
 They bring me sorrow touch'd with  
 joy,  
 The merry merry bells of Yule.

## XXIX.

With such compelling cause to grieve  
 As daily vexes household peace,  
 And chains regret to his decease,  
 How dare we keep our Christmas-eve;

Which brings no more a welcome guest  
 To enrich the threshold of the night  
 With shower'd largess of delight  
 In dance and song and game and jest?

Yet go, and while the holly boughs  
 Entwine the cold baptismal font,  
 Make one wreath more for Use and  
 Wont,  
 That guard the portals of the house;

Old sisters of a day gone by,  
 Gray nurses, loving nothing new;  
 Why should they miss their yearly  
 due  
 Before their time? They too will die.

## xxx.

With trembling fingers did we weave  
 The holly round the Christmas  
 hearth;  
 A rainy cloud possess'd the earth,  
 And sadly fell our Christmas-eve.

At our old pastimes in the hall  
 We gamboll'd, making vain pretence  
 Of gladness, with an awful sense  
 Of one mute Shadow watching all.

We paused: the winds were in the beech:  
 We heard them sweep the winter  
 land;  
 And in a circle hand-in-hand  
 Sat silent, looking each at each.

Then echo-like our voices rang;  
 We sung, tho' every eye was dim,  
 A merry song we sang with him  
 Last year: impetuously we sang:

We ceased: a gentler feeling crept  
 Upon us: surely rest is meet:  
 'They rest,' we said, 'their sleep is  
 sweet,'  
 And silence follow'd, and we wept.

Our voices took a higher range;  
 Once more we sang: 'They do not  
 die  
 Nor lose their mortal sympathy,  
 Nor change to us, altho' they change;

'Rapt from the fickle and the frail  
 With gather'd power, yet the same,  
 Pierces the keen seraphic flame  
 From orb to orb, from veil to veil.'

Rise, happy morn, rise, holy morn,  
 Draw forth the cheerful day from  
 night:  
 O Father, touch the east, and light  
 The light that shone when Hope was  
 born.

## xxxI.

When Lazarus left his charnel-cave,  
 And home to Mary's house return'd,  
 Was this demanded — if he yearn'd  
 To hear her weeping by his grave?

'Where wert thou, brother, those four  
 days?'

There lives no record of reply,  
 Which telling what it is to die  
 Had surely added praise to praise.

From every house the neighbours met,  
 The streets were fill'd with joyful  
 sound,  
 A solemn gladness even crown'd  
 The purple brows of Olivet.

Behold a man raised up by Christ!  
 The rest remaineth unreveal'd;  
 He told it not; or something seal'd  
 The lips of that Evangelist.

## xxxII.

Her eyes are homes of silent prayer,  
 Nor other thought her mind admits  
 But, he was dead, and there he sits,  
 And he that brought him back is there.

Then one deep love doth supersede  
 All other, when her ardent gaze  
 Roves from the living brother's face,  
 And rests upon the Life indeed.

All subtle thought, all curious fears,  
 Borne down by gladness so complete,  
 She bows, she bathes the Saviour's  
 feet  
 With costly spikenard and with tears.

Thrice blest whose lives are faithful  
 prayers,  
 Whose loves in higher love endure;  
 What souls possess themselves so  
 pure,  
 Or is there blessedness like theirs?

## xxxIII.

O thou that after toil and storm  
 Mayst seem to have reach'd a purer  
 air,  
 Whose faith has centre everywhere,  
 Nor cares to fix itself to form,

Leave thou thy sister when she prays,  
 Her early Heaven, her happy views;  
 Nor thou with shadow'd hint confuse  
 A life that leads melodious days.

Her faith thro' form is pure as thine,  
Her hands are quicker unto good:  
Oh, sacred be the flesh and blood  
To which she links a truth divine!

See thou, that countest reason ripe  
In holding by the law within,  
Thou fail not in a world of sin,  
And ev'n for want of such a type.

## XXXIV.

My own dim life should teach me this,  
That life shall live for evermore,  
Else earth is darkness at the core,  
And dust and ashes all that is;

This round of green, this orb of flame,  
Fantastic beauty; such as lurks  
In some wild Poet, when he works  
Without a conscience or an aim.

What thien were God to such as I?  
'Twere hardly worth my while to  
choose  
Of things all mortal, or to use  
A little patience ere I die;

'Twere best at once to sink to peace,  
Like birds the charming serpent  
draws,  
To drop head-foremost in the jaws  
Of vacant darkness and to cease.

## XXXV.

Yet if some voice that man could trust  
Should murmur from the narrow  
house,  
'The cheeks drop in; the body  
bows;  
Man dies: nor is there hope in dust:'

Might I not say? 'Yet even here,  
But for one hour, O Love, I strive  
To keep so sweet a thing alive:'  
But I should turn mine ears and hear

The moanings of the homeless sea,  
The sound of streams that swift or  
slow  
Draw down Æonian hills, and sow  
The dust of continents to be;

And Love would answer with a sigh,  
'The sound of that forgetful shore  
Will change my sweetness more and  
more,  
Half-dead to know that I shall die.'

O me, what profits it to put  
An idle case? If Death were seen  
At first as Death, Love had not been,  
Or been in narrowest working shut,

Mere fellowship of sluggish moods,  
Or in his coarsest Satyr-shape  
Had bruised the herb and crush'd  
the grape,  
And bask'd and batten'd in the woods.

## XXXVI.

Tho' truths in manhood darkly join,  
Deep-seated in our mystic frame,  
We yield all blessing to the name  
Of Him that made them current coin;

For Wisdom dealt with mortal powers,  
Where truth in closest words shall  
fail,  
When truth embodied in a tale  
Shall enter in at lowly doors.

And so the Word had breath, and  
wrought  
With human hands the creed of  
creeds  
In loveliness of perfect deeds,  
More strong than all poetic thought;

Which he may read that binds the sheaf,  
Or builds the house, or digs the grave,  
And those wild eyes that watch the  
wave  
In roarings round the coral reef.

## XXXVII.

Urania speaks with darken'd brow:  
'Thou pratest here where thou art  
least;  
This faith has many a purer priest,  
And many an abler voice than thou.

'Go down beside thy native rill,  
On thy Parnassus set thy feet,  
And hear thy laurel whisper sweet  
About the ledges of the hill.'

And my Melpomene replies,  
A touch of shame upon her cheek :  
' I am not worthy ev'n to speak  
Of thy prevailing mysteries;

' For I am but an earthly Muse,  
And owning but a little art  
To lull with song an aching heart,  
And render human love his dues;

' But brooding on the dear one dead,  
And all he said of things divine,  
(And dear to me as sacred wine  
To dying lips is all he said),

' I murmur'd, as I came along,  
Of comfort clasp'd in truth reveal'd;  
And loiter'd in the master's field,  
And darken'd sanctities with song.'

## XXXVIII.

With weary steps I loiter on,  
Tho' always under alter'd skies  
The purple from the distance dies,  
My prospect and horizon gone.

No joy the blowing season gives,  
The herald melodies of spring,  
But in the songs I love to sing  
A doubtful gleam of solace lives.

If any care for what is here  
Survive in spirits render'd free,  
Then are these songs I sing of thee  
Not all ungrateful to thine ear.

## XXXIX.

Old warder of these buried bones,  
And answering now my random  
stroke  
With fruitful cloud and living smoke,  
Dark yew, that graspest at the stones

And dippest toward the dreamless head,  
To thee too comes the golden hour  
When flower is feeling after flower;  
But Sorrow — fixt upon the dead,

And darkening the dark graves of men, —  
What whisper'd from her lying lips?  
Thy gloom is kindled at the tips,  
And passes into gloom again.

## XL.

Could we forget the widow'd hour  
And look on Spirits breathed away,  
As on a maiden in the day  
When first she wears her orange-flower!

When crown'd with blessing she doth  
rise  
To take her latest leave of home,  
And hopes and light regrets that  
come  
Make April of her tender eyes;

And doubtful joys the father move,  
And tears are on the mother's face,  
As parting with a long embrace  
She enters other realms of love;

Her office there to rear, to teach,  
Becoming as is meet and fit  
A link among the days, to knit  
The generations each with each;

And, doubtless, unto thee is given  
A life that bears immortal fruit  
In those great offices that suit  
The full-grown energies of heaven.

Ay me, the difference I discern!  
How often shall her old fireside  
Be cheer'd with tidings of the bride,  
How often she herself return,

And tell them all they would have told,  
And bring her babe, and make her  
boast,  
Till even those that miss'd her  
most  
Shall count new things as dear as old:

But thou and I have shaken hands,  
Till growing winters lay me low;  
My paths are in the fields I know,  
And thine in undiscover'd lands.

## XLI.

Thy spirit ere our fatal loss  
Did ever rise from high to higher;  
As mounts the heavenward altar-  
fire,  
As flies the lighter thro' the gross.



But thou art turn'd to something strange,  
And I have lost the links that bound  
Thy changes; here upon the ground,  
No more partaker of thy change.

Deep folly! yet that this could be —  
That I could wing my will with  
might  
To leap the grades of life and light,  
And flash at once, my friend, to thee.

For tho' my nature rarely yields  
To that vague fear implied in death;  
\* Nor shudders at the gulfs beneath,  
The howlings from forgotten fields;

Yet oft when sundown skirts the moor  
An inner trouble I behold,  
A spectral doubt which makes me  
cold,  
That I shall be thy mate no more,

Tho' following with an upward mind  
The wonders that have come to  
thee,  
Thro' all the secular to-be,  
But evermore a life behind.

## XLII.

I vex my heart with fancies dim:  
He still outstript me in the race;  
It was but unity of place  
That made me dream I rank'd with  
him.

And so may Place retain us still,  
And he the much-beloved again,  
A lord of large experience, train  
To riper growth the mind and will:

And what delights can equal those  
That stir the spirit's inner deeps,  
When one that loves but knows not,  
reaps  
A truth from one that loves and knows?

## XLIII.

If Sleep and Death be truly one,  
And every spirit's folded bloom  
Thro' all its interval gloom  
In some long trance should slumber  
on;

Unconscious of the sliding hour,  
Bare of the body, might it last,  
And silent traces of the past  
Be all the colour of the flower:

So then were nothing lost to man;  
So that still garden of the souls  
In many a figured leaf enrolls  
The total world since life began;

And love will last as pure and whole  
As when he loved me here in  
Time,  
And at the spiritual prime  
Rewaken with the dawning soul.

## XLIV.

How fares it with the happy dead?  
For here the man is more and  
more;  
But he forgets the days before  
God shut the doorways of his head.

The days have vanish'd, tone and tint,  
And yet perhaps the hoarding sense  
Gives out at times (he knows not  
whence)  
A little flash, a mystic hint;

And in the long harmonious years  
(If Death so taste Lethean springs),  
May some dim touch of earthly  
things  
Surprise thee ranging with thy peers.

If such a dreamy touch should fall,  
O turn thee round, resolve the  
doubt;  
My guardian angel will speak out  
In that high place, and tell thee all.

## XLV.

The baby new to earth and sky,  
What time his tender palm is prest  
Against the circle of the breast,  
Has never thought that 'this is I:'

But as he grows he gathers much,  
And learns the use of 'I,' and  
'me,'  
And finds 'I am not what I see,  
And other than the things I touch.'

Reference to Virgil Aeneid vi. 441 f. Elysian camp  
"gulfs". Howlings. "Measure for Measure" III.1.26. )  
v.l. 264. Cf on "forgotten" To Palace of Art p 43 or 140

So rounds he to a separate mind  
 From whence clear memory may  
 begin,  
 As thro' the frame that binds him in  
 His isolation grows defined.

This use may lie in blood and breath,  
 Which else were fruitless of their  
 due,  
 Had man to learn himself anew  
 Beyond the second birth of Death.

## XLVI.

We ranging down this lower track,  
 The path we came by, thorn and  
 flower,  
 Is shadow'd by the growing hour,  
 Lest life should fail in looking back.

So be it: there no shade can last  
 In that deep dawn behind the tomb,  
 But clear from marge to marge shall  
 bloom

The eternal landscape of the past;

A lifelong tract of time reveal'd;  
 The fruitful hours of still increase;  
 Days order'd in a wealthy peace,  
 And those five years its richest field.

O Love, thy province were not large,  
 A bounded field, nor stretching  
 far;  
 Look also, Love, a brooding star,  
 A rosy warmth from marge to marge.

## XLVII.

That each, who seems a separate whole,  
 Should move his rounds, and fusing  
 all  
 The skirts of self again, should fall  
 Remerging in the general Soul,

Is faith as vague as all unsweet:  
 Eternal form shall still divide  
 The eternal soul from all beside;  
 And I shall know him when we meet:

And we shall sit at endless feast,  
 Enjoying each the other's good:  
 What vaster dream can hit the mood  
 Of Love on earth? He seeks at least

Upon the last and sharpest height,  
 Before the spirits fade away,  
 Some landing-place, to clasp and  
 say,  
 'Farewell! We lose ourselves in light.'

## XLVIII.

If these brief lays, of Sorrow born,  
 Were taken to be such as closed  
 Grave doubts and answers here pro-  
 posed,  
 Then these were such as men might  
 scorn:

Her care is not to part and prove;  
 She takes, when harsher moods  
 remit,  
 What slender shade of doubt may  
 flit,  
 And makes it vassal unto love:

And hence, indeed, she sports with  
 words,  
 But better serves a wholesome law,  
 And holds it sin and shame to draw  
 The deepest measure from the chords:

Nor dare she trust a larger lay,  
 But rather loosens from the lip  
 Short swallow-flights of song, that  
 dip  
 Their wings in tears, and skim away.

## XLIX.

From art, from nature, from the schools,  
 Let random influences glance,  
 Like light in many a shiver'd lance  
 That breaks about the dappled pools:

The lightest wave of thought shall lisp,  
 The fancy's tenderest eddy wreathe,  
 The slightest air of song shall breathe  
 To make the sullen surface crisp.

And look thy look, and go thy way,  
 But blame not thou the winds that  
 make  
 The seeming-wanton ripple break,  
 The tender-pencill'd shadow play.

Beneath all fancied hopes and fears  
 Ay me, the sorrow deepens down,

Whose muffled motions blindly  
drown  
The bases of my life in tears.

## L.

Be near me when my light is low,  
When the blood creeps, and the  
nerves prick  
And tingle; and the heart is sick,  
And all the wheels of Being slow.

Be near me when the sensuous frame  
Is rack'd with pangs that conquer  
trust;  
And Time, a maniac scattering dust,  
And Life, a Fury slinging flame.

Be near me when my faith is dry,  
And men the flies of latter spring,  
That lay their eggs, and sting and  
sing  
And weave their petty cells and die.

Be near me when I fade away,  
To point the term of human strife,  
And on the low dark verge of life  
The twilight of eternal day.

## LI.

Do we indeed desire the dead  
Should still be near us at our side?  
Is there no baseness we would  
hide?  
No inner vileness that we dread?

Shall he for whose applause I strove,  
I had such reverence for his blame,  
See with clear eye some hidden  
shame  
And I be lessen'd in his love?

I wrong the grave with fears untrue:  
Shall love be blamed for want of  
faith?  
There must be wisdom with great  
Death:  
The dead shall look me thro' and thro'.

Be near us when we climb or fall:  
Ye watch, like God, the rolling hours  
With larger other eyes than ours,  
To make allowance for us all.

## LII.

I cannot love thee as I ought,  
For love reflects the thing beloved;  
My words are only words, and moved  
Upon the topmost froth of thought.

'Yet blame not thou thy plaintive song,'  
The Spirit of true love replied;  
'Thou canst not move me from thy  
side,  
Nor human frailty do me wrong.

'What keeps a spirit wholly true  
To that ideal which he bears?  
What record? not the sinless years  
That breathed beneath the Syrian blue:

'So fret not, like an idle girl,  
That life is dash'd with flecks of sin.  
Abide: thy wealth is gather'd in,  
When Time hath sunder'd shell from  
pearl.'

## LIII.

How many a father have I seen,  
A sober man, among his boys,  
Whose youth was full of foolish  
noise,  
Who wears his manhood hale and green:

And dare we to this fancy give,  
That had the wild oat not been  
sown,  
The soil, left barren, scarce had  
grown  
The grain by which a man may live?

Or, if we held the doctrine sound  
For life outliving heats of youth,  
Yet who would preach it as a truth  
To those that eddy round and round?

Hold thou the good: define it well:  
For fear divine Philosophy  
Should push beyond her mark, and be  
Procuress to the Lords of Hell.

## LIV.

Oh yet we trust that somehow good  
Will be the final goal of ill,  
To pangs of nature, sins of will,  
Defects of doubt, and taints of blood;

That nothing walks with aimless feet;  
That not one life shall be destroy'd,  
Or cast as rubbish to the void,  
When God hath made the pile complete;

That not a worm is cloven in vain;  
That not a moth with vain desire  
Is shrivell'd in a fruitless fire,  
Or but subserves another's gain.

Behold, we know not anything;  
I can but trust that good shall fall  
At last — far off — at last, to all,  
And every winter change to spring.

So runs my dream: but what am I?  
An infant crying in the night:  
An infant crying for the light:  
And with no language but a cry.

## LV.

The wish, that of the living whole  
No life may fail beyond the grave,  
Derives it not from what we have  
The likest God within the soul?

Are God and Nature then at strife,  
That Nature lends such evil dreams?  
So careful of the type she seems,  
So careless of the single life;

That I, considering everywhere  
Her secret meaning in her deeds,  
And finding that of fifty seeds  
She often brings but one to bear,

I falter where I firmly trod,  
And falling with my weight of cares  
Upon the great world's altar-stairs  
That slope thro' darkness up to God,

I stretch lame hands of faith, and grope,  
And gather dust and chaff, and call  
To what I feel is Lord of all,  
And faintly trust the larger hope.

## LVI.

'So careful of the type?' but no.  
From scarp'd cliff and quarried stone  
She cries, 'A thousand types are  
gone:  
I care for nothing, all shall go.

'Thou makest thine appeal to me:  
I bring to life, I bring to death:  
The spirit does but mean the breath:  
I know no more.' And he, shall he,

Man, her last work, who seem'd so fair,  
Such splendid purpose in his eyes,  
Who roll'd the psalm to wintry  
skies,  
Who built him fanes of fruitless prayer,

Who trusted God was love indeed  
And love Creation's final law —  
Tho' Nature, red in tooth and claw  
With ravine, shriek'd against his creed —

Who loved, who suffer'd countless ills,  
Who battled for the True, the Just,  
Be blown about the desert dust,  
Or seal'd within the iron hills?

No more? A monster then, a dream,  
A discord. Dragons of the prime,  
That tare each other in their slime,  
Were mellow music match'd with him.

O life as futile, then, as frail!  
O for thy voice to soothe and bless!  
What hope of answer, or redress?  
Behind the veil, behind the veil.

## LVII.

Peace; come away: the song of woe  
Is after all an earthly song:  
Peace; come away: we do him  
wrong  
To sing so wildly: let us go,

Come; let us go: your cheeks are pale;  
But half my life I leave behind:  
Methinks my friend is richly shrined;  
But I shall pass; my work will fail.

Yet in these ears, till hearing dies,  
One set slow bell will seem to toll  
The passing of the sweetest soul  
That ever look'd with human eyes.

I hear it now, and o'er and o'er,  
Eternal greetings to the dead;  
And 'Ave, Ave, Ave,' said,  
'Adieu, adieu,' for evermore.

## LVIII.

In those sad words I took farewell:  
 Like echoes in sepulchral halls,  
 As drop by drop the water falls  
 In vaults and catacombs, they fell;

And, falling, idly broke the peace  
 Of hearts that beat from day to day,  
 Half-conscious of their dying clay,  
 And those cold crypts where they shall  
 cease.

The high Muse answer'd: 'Wherefore  
 grieve  
 Thy brethren with a fruitless tear?  
 Abide a little longer here,  
 And thou shalt take a nobler leave.'

## LIX.

O Sorrow, wilt thou live with me  
 No casual mistress, but a wife,  
 My bosom-friend and half of life;  
 As I confess it needs must be;

O Sorrow, wilt thou rule my blood,  
 Be sometimes lovely like a bride,  
 And put thy harsher moods aside,  
 If thou wilt have me wise and good.

My centred passion cannot move,  
 Nor will it lessen from to-day;  
 But I'll have leave at times to play  
 As with the creature of my love;

And set thee forth, for thou art mine,  
 With so much hope for years to  
 come,  
 That, howsoe'er I know thee, some  
 Could hardly tell what name were thine.

## LX.

He past; a soul of nobler tone:  
 My spirit loved and loves him yet,  
 Like some poor girl whose heart is  
 set  
 On one whose rank exceeds her own

He mixing with his proper sphere,  
 She finds the baseness of her lot,  
 Half jealous of she knows not what,  
 And envying all that meet him there.

The little village looks forlorn;  
 She sighs amid her narrow days,  
 Moving about the household ways,  
 In that dark house where she was born.

The foolish neighbours come and go,  
 And tease her till the day draws by:  
 At night she weeps, 'How vain  
 am I!  
 How should he love a thing so low?'

## LXI.

If, in thy second state sublime,  
 Thy ransom'd reason change replies  
 With all the circle of the wise,  
 The perfect flower of human time;

And if thou cast thine eyes below,  
 How dimly character'd and slight,  
 How dwarf'd a growth of cold and  
 night,  
 How blanch'd with darkness must I grow!

Yet turn thee to the doubtful shore,  
 Where thy first form was made a  
 man;  
 I loved thee, Spirit, and love, nor can  
 The soul of Shakspeare love thee more.

## LXII.

Tho' if an eye that's downward cast  
 Could make thee somewhat blench  
 or fail,  
 Then be my love an idle tale,  
 And fading legend of the past;

And thou, as one that once declined,  
 When he was little more than boy,  
 On some unworthy heart with joy,  
 But lives to wed an equal mind;

And breathes a novel world, the while  
 His other passion wholly dies,  
 Or in the light of deeper eyes  
 Is matter for a flying smile.

## LXIII.

Yet pity for a horse o'er-driven,  
 And love in which my hound has  
 part,  
 Can hang no weight upon my heart  
 In its assumptions up to heaven;

And I am so much more than these,  
As thou, perchance, art more than I,  
And yet I spare them sympathy,  
And I would set their pains at ease.

So mayst thou watch me where I weep,  
As, unto vaster motions bound,  
The circuits of thine orbit round  
A higher height, a deeper deep.

## LXIV.

Dost thou look back on what hath been,  
As some divinely gifted man,  
Whose life in low estate began  
And on a simple village green;

Who breaks his birth's invidious bar,  
And grasps the skirts of happy  
chance,  
And breasts the blows of circum-  
stance,  
And grapples with his evil star;

Who makes by force his merit known  
And lives to clutch the golden keys,  
To mould a mighty state's decrees,  
And shape the whisper of the throne;

And moving up from high to higher,  
Becomes on Fortune's crowning slope  
The pillar of a people's hope,  
The centre of a world's desire;

Yet feels, as in a pensive dream,  
When all his active powers are still,  
A distant dearness in the hill,  
A secret sweetness in the stream,

The limit of his narrower fate,  
While yet beside its vocal springs  
He play'd at counsellors and kings,  
With one that was his earliest mate;

Who ploughs with pain his native lea  
And reaps the labour of his hands,  
Or in the furrow musing stands;  
'Does my old friend remember me?'

## LXV.

Sweet soul, do with me as thou wilt;  
I lull a fancy trouble-tost  
With 'Love's too precious to be lost,  
A little grain shall not be split.'

And in that solace can I sing,  
Till out of painful phases wrought  
There flutters up a happy thought,  
Self-balanced on a lightsome wing:

Since we deserved the name of friends,  
And thine effect so lives in me,  
A part of mine may live in thee  
And move thee on to noble ends.

## LXVI.

You thought my heart too far diseased;  
You wonder when my fancies play  
To find me gay among the gay,  
Like one with any trifle pleased.

The shade by which my life was crost,  
Which makes a desert in the mind,  
Has made me kindly with my kind,  
And like to him whose sight is lost;

Whose feet are guided thro' the land,  
Whose jest among his friends is  
free,  
Who takes the children on his knee,  
And winds their curls about his hand:

He plays with threads, he beats his chair  
For pastime, dreaming of the sky;  
His inner day can never die,  
His night of loss is always there.

## LXVII.

When on my bed the moonlight falls,  
I know that in thy place of rest  
By that broad water of the west,  
There comes a glory on the walls:

Thy marble bright in dark appears,  
As slowly steals a silver flame  
Along the letters of thy name,  
And o'er the number of thy years.

The mystic glory swims away;  
From off my bed the moonlight dies;  
And closing eaves of wearied eyes  
I sleep till dusk is dipt in gray:

And then I know the mist is drawn  
A lucid veil from coast to coast,  
And in the dark church like a ghost  
Thy tablet glimmers to the dawn.



## LXVIII.

When in the down I sink my head,  
 Sleep, Death's twin-brother, times  
 my breath;  
 Sleep, Death's twin-brother, knows  
 not Death,  
 Nor can I dream of thee as dead:

I walk as ere I walk'd forlorn,  
 When all our path was fresh with  
 dew,  
 And all the bugle breezes blew  
 Reveillée to the breaking morn.

But what is this? I turn about,  
 I find a trouble in thine eye,  
 Which makes me sad I know not  
 why,  
 Nor can my dream resolve the doubt:

But ere the lark hath left the lea  
 I wake, and I discern the truth;  
 It is the trouble of my youth  
 That foolish sleep transfers to thee.

## LXIX.

I dream'd there would be Spring no  
 more,  
 That Nature's ancient power was  
 lost:  
 The streets were black with smoke  
 and frost,  
 They chatter'd trifles at the door:

I wander'd from the noisy town,  
 I found a wood with thorny boughs:  
 I took the thorns to bind my brows,  
 I wore them like a civic crown:

I met with scoffs, I met with scorns  
 From youth and babe and hoary  
 hairs:  
 They call'd me in the public squares  
 The fool that wears a crown of thorns:

They call'd me fool, they call'd me  
 child:  
 I found an angel of the night;  
 The voice was low, the look was  
 bright;  
 He look'd upon my crown and smiled:

He reach'd the glory of a hand,  
 That seem'd to touch it into leaf:  
 The voice was not the voice of grief,  
 The words were hard to understand.

## LXX.

I cannot see the features right,  
 When on the gloom I strive to paint  
 The face I know; the hues are faint  
 And mix with hollow masks of night;

Cloud-towers by ghostly masons wrought,  
 A gulf that ever shuts and gapes,  
 A hand that points, and palled shapes  
 In shadowy thoroughfares of thought;

And crowds that stream from yawning  
 doors,  
 And shoals of pucker'd faces drive;  
 Dark bulks that tumble half alive,  
 And lazy lengths on boundless shores;

Till all at once beyond the will  
 I hear a wizard music roll,  
 And thro' a lattice on the soul  
 Looks thy fair face and makes it still.

## LXXI.

Sleep, kinsman thou to death and trance  
 And madness, thou hast forged at  
 last  
 A night-long Present of the Past  
 In which we went thro' summer France.

Hadst thou such credit with the soul?  
 Then bring an opiate trebly strong,  
 Drug down the blindfold sense of  
 wrong  
 That so my pleasure may be whole;

While now we talk as once we talk'd  
 Of men and minds, the dust of  
 change,  
 The days that grow to something  
 strange,  
 In walking as of old we walk'd

Beside the river's wooded reach,  
 The fortress, and the mountain  
 ridge,  
 The cataract flashing from the  
 bridge,  
 The breaker breaking on the beach.

## LXXII.

Risest thou thus, dim dawn, again,  
 And howlest, issuing out of night,  
 With blasts that blow the poplar  
 white,  
 And lash with storm the streaming  
 pane?

Day, when my crown'd estate begun  
 To pine in that reverse of doom,  
 Which sicken'd every living bloom,  
 And blurr'd the splendour of the sun;

Who usherest in the dolorous hour  
 With thy quick tears that make the  
 rose  
 Pull sideways, and the daisy close  
 Her crimson fringes to the shower;

Who might'st have heaved a windless  
 flame  
 Up the deep East, or, whispering,  
 play'd  
 A chequer-work of beam and shade  
 Along the hills, yet look'd the same.

As wan, as chill, as wild as now;  
 Day, mark'd as with some hideous  
 crime,  
 When the dark hand struck down  
 thro' time,  
 And cancell'd nature's best: but thou

Lift as thou may'st thy burthen'd brows  
 Thro' clouds that drench the morn-  
 ing star,  
 And whirl the ungarner'd sheaf afar,  
 And sow the sky with flying boughs,

And up thy vault with roaring sound  
 Climb thy thick noon, disastrous  
 day;  
 Touch thy dull goal of joyless gray,  
 And hide thy shame beneath the ground.

## LXXIII.

So many worlds, so much to do,  
 So little done, such things to be,  
 How know I what had need of  
 thee,  
 For thou wert strong as thou wert true?

The fame is quench'd that I foresaw,  
 The head hath miss'd an earthly  
 wreath:  
 I curse not nature, no, nor death;  
 For nothing is that errs from law.

We pass; the path that each man trod  
 Is dim, or will be dim, with weeds:  
 What fame is left for human deeds  
 In endless age? It rests with God.

O hollow wraith of dying fame,  
 Fade wholly, while the soul exults,  
 And self-infolds the large results  
 Of force that would have forged a  
 name.

## LXXIV.

As sometimes in a dead man's face,  
 To those that watch it more and  
 more,  
 A likeness, hardly seen before,  
 Comes out—to some one of his race:

So, dearest, now thy brows are cold,  
 I see thee what thou art, and know  
 Thy likeness to the wise below,  
 Thy kindred with the great of old.

But there is more than I can see,  
 And what I see I leave unsaid,  
 Nor speak it, knowing Death has  
 made  
 His darkness beautiful with thee.

## LXXV.

I leave thy praises unexpress'd  
 In verse that brings myself relief,  
 And by the measure of my grief  
 I leave thy greatness to be guess'd;

What practice howsoe'er expert  
 In fitting aptest words to things,  
 Or voice the richest-toned that  
 sings,  
 Hath power to give thee as thou wert?

I care not in these fading days  
 To raise a cry that lasts not long,  
 And round thee with the breeze of  
 song  
 To stir a little dust of praise.

Thy leaf has perish'd in the green,  
 And, while we breathe beneath the  
 sun,  
 The world which credits what is done  
 Is cold to all that might have been.

So here shall silence guard thy fame;  
 But somewhere, out of human view,  
 Whate'er thy hands are set to do  
 Is wrought with tumult of acclaim.

## LXXVI.

Take wings of fancy, and ascend,  
 And in a moment set thy face  
 Where all the starry heavens of  
 space  
 Are sharpen'd to a needle's end;

Take wings of foresight; lighten thro'  
 The secular abyss to come,  
 And lo, thy deepest lays are dumb  
 Before the mouldering of a yew;

And if the matin songs, that woke  
 The darkness of our planet, last,  
 Thine own shall wither in the vast,  
 Ere half the lifetime of an oak.

Ere these have clothed their branchy  
 bowers  
 With fifty Mays, thy songs are vain;  
 And what are they when these re-  
 main  
 The ruin'd shells of hollow towers?

## LXXVII.

What hope is here for modern rhyme  
 To him, who turns a musing eye  
 On songs, and deeds, and lives, that  
 lie  
 Foreshorten'd in the tract of time?

These mortal lullabies of pain  
 May bind a book, may line a box,  
 May serve to curl a maiden's locks;  
 Or when a thousand moons shall wane

A man upon a stall may find,  
 And, passing, turn the page that  
 tells  
 A grief, then changed to something  
 else,  
 Sung by a long-forgotten mind.

But what of that? My darken'd ways  
 Shall ring with music all the same;  
 To breathe my loss is more than  
 fame,  
 To utter love more sweet than praise.

## LXXVIII.

Again at Christmas did we weave  
 The holly round the Christmas  
 hearth;  
 The silent snow possess'd the earth,  
 And calmly fell our Christmas-eve:

The yule-clog sparkled keen with frost,  
 No wing of wind the region swept,  
 But over all things brooding slept  
 The quiet sense of something lost.

As in the winters left behind,  
 Again our ancient games had place,  
 The mimic picture's breathing grace,  
 And dance and song and hoodman-blind.

Who show'd a token of distress?  
 No single tear, no mark of pain:  
 O sorrow, then can sorrow wane?  
 O grief, can grief be changed to less?

O last regret, regret can die!  
 No — mixt with all this mystic frame,  
 Her deep relations are the same,  
 But with long use her tears are dry.

## LXXIX.

'More than my brothers are to me,' —  
 Let this not vex thee, noble heart!  
 I know thee of what force thou  
 art  
 To hold the costliest love in fee.

But thou and I are one in kind,  
 As moulded like in Nature's mint;  
 And hill and wood and field did  
 print  
 The same sweet forms in either mind.

For us the same cold streamlet curl'd  
 Thro' all his eddying coves; the  
 same  
 All winds that roam the twilight  
 came  
 In whispers of the beauteous world.

At one dear knee we proffer'd vows,  
 One lesson from one book we learn'd,  
 Ere childhood's flaxen ringlet turn'd  
 To black and brown on kindred brows.

And so my wealth resembles thine,  
 But he was rich where I was poor,  
 And he supplied my want the more  
 As his unlikeness fitted mine.

## LXXX.

If any vague desire should rise,  
 That holy Death ere Arthur died  
 Had moved me kindly from his  
 side,  
 And dropt the dust on tearless eyes;

Then fancy shapes, as fancy can,  
 The grief my loss in him had wrought,  
 A grief as deep as life or thought,  
 But stay'd in peace with God and man.

I make a picture in the brain;  
 I hear the sentence that he speaks;  
 He bears the burthen of the weeks  
 But turns his burthen into gain.

His credit thus shall set me free;  
 And, influence-rich to soothe and  
 save,  
 Unused example from the grave  
 Reach out dead hands to comfort me.

## LXXXI.

Could I have said while he was here,  
 'My love shall now no further  
 range;  
 There cannot come a mellow  
 change,  
 For now is love mature in ear.'

Love, then, had hope of richer store:  
 What end is here to my complaint?  
 This haunting whisper makes me  
 faint,  
 'More years had made me love thee  
 more.'

But Death returns an answer sweet:  
 'My sudden frost was sudden gain,  
 And gave all ripeness to the grain,  
 It might have drawn from after-heat.'

## LXXXII.

I wage not any feud with Death  
 For changes wrought on form and  
 face;  
 No lower life that earth's embrace  
 May breed with him, can fright my  
 faith.

Eternal process moving on,  
 From state to state the spirit walks;  
 And these are but the shatter'd  
 stalks,  
 Or ruin'd chrysalis of one.

Nor blame I Death, because he bare  
 The use of virtue out of earth:  
 I know transplanted human worth  
 Will bloom to profit, elsewhere.

For this alone on Death I wreak  
 The wrath that garners in my heart:  
 He put our lives so far apart  
 We cannot hear each other speak.

## LXXXIII.

Dip down upon the northern shore,  
 O sweet new-year delaying long;  
 Thou doest expectant nature wrong;  
 Delaying long, delay no more.

What stays thee from the clouded noons,  
 Thy sweetness from its proper place?  
 Can trouble live with April days,  
 Or sadness in the summer moons?

Bring orchis, bring the foxglove spire,  
 The little speedwell's darling blue,  
 Deep tulips dash'd with fiery dew,  
 Laburnums, dropping-wells of fire.

O thou new-year, delaying long,  
 Delayest the sorrow in my blood,  
 That longs to burst a frozen bud  
 And flood a fresher throat with song.

## LXXXIV.

When I contemplate all alone  
 The life that had been thine below,  
 And fix my thoughts on all the glow  
 To which thy crescent would have  
 grown;

I see thee sitting crown'd with good,  
A central warmth diffusing bliss  
In glance and smile, and clasp and  
kiss,

On all the branches of thy blood;

Thy blood, my friend, and partly mine;  
For now the day was drawing on,  
When thou should'st link thy life  
with one

Of mine own house, and boys of thine

Had babbled 'Uncle' on my knee;  
But that remorseless iron hour  
Made cypress of her orange flower,  
Despair of Hope, and earth of thee.

I seem to meet their least desire,  
To clap their cheeks, to call them  
mine.

I see their unborn faces shine  
Beside the never-lighted fire.

I see myself an honour'd guest,  
Thy partner in the flowery walk  
Of letters, genial table-talk,  
Or deep dispute, and graceful jest;

While now thy prosperous labour fills  
The lips of men with honest praise,  
And sun by sun the happy days  
Descend below the golden hills

With promise of a morn-as fair;  
And all the train of bounteous hours  
Conduct by paths of growing powers,  
To reverence and the silver hair;

Till slowly worn her earthly robe,  
Her lavish mission richly wrought,  
Leaving great legacies of thought,  
Thy spirit should fail from off the globe;

What time mine own might also flee,  
As link'd with thine in love and fate,  
And, hovering o'er the dolorous  
strait

To the other shore, involved in thee,

Arrive at last the blessed goal,  
And He that died in Holy Land  
Would reach us out the shining hand  
And take us as a single soul.

What reed was that on which I leant?  
Ah, backward fancy, wherefore wake  
The old bitterness again, and break  
The low beginnings of content.

LXXXV.

This truth came borne with bier and pall,  
I felt it, when I sorrow'd most,  
'Tis better to have loved and lost,  
Than never to have loved at all—

O true in word, and tried in deed,  
Demanding, so to bring relief  
To this which is our common grief,  
What kind of life is that I lead;

And whether trust in things above  
Be dimm'd of sorrow, or sustain'd;  
And whether love for him have  
drain'd

My capabilities of love;

Your words have virtue such as draws  
A faithful answer from the breast,  
Thro' light reproaches, half exprest,  
And loyal unto kindly laws.

My blood an even tenor kept,  
Till on mine ear this message falls,  
That in Vienna's fatal walls  
God's finger touch'd him, and he slept.

The great Intelligences fair  
That range above our mortal state,  
In circle round the blessed gate,  
Received and gave him welcome there;

And led him thro' the blissful climes,  
And show'd him in the fountain fresh  
All knowledge that the sons of flesh  
Shall gather in the cycled times.

But I remain'd, whose hopes were dim,  
Whose life, whose thoughts were little  
worth,  
To wander on a darken'd earth,  
Where all things round me breathed of  
him.

O friendship, equal-poised control,  
O heart, with kindest motion warm,  
O sacred essence, other form,  
O solemn ghost, O crowned soul!

Yet none could better know than I,  
 How much of act at human hands  
 The sense of human will demands  
 By which we dare to live or die.

Whatever way my days decline,  
 I felt and feel, tho' left alone,  
 His being working in mine own,  
 The footsteps of his life in mine;

A life that all the Muses deck'd  
 With gifts of grace, that might express  
 All-comprehensive tenderness,  
 All-subtilising intellect:

And so my passion hath not swerved  
 To works of weakness, but I find  
 An image comforting the mind,  
 And in my grief a strength reserved.

Likewise the imaginative woe,  
 That loved to handle spiritual strife,  
 Diffused the shock thro' all my  
 life,  
 But in the present broke the blow.

My pulses therefore beat again  
 For other friends that once I met;  
 Nor can it suit me to forget  
 The mighty hopes that make us men.

I woo your love: I count it crime  
 To mourn for any overmuch;  
 I, the divided half of such  
 A friendship as had master'd Time;

Which masters Time indeed, and is  
 Eternal, separate from fears:  
 The all-assuming months and years  
 Can take no part away from this:

But Summer on the steaming floods,  
 And Spring that swells the narrow  
 brooks,  
 And Autumn, with a noise of rooks,  
 That gather in the waning woods,

And every pulse of wind and wave  
 Recalls, in change of light or  
 gloom,  
 My old affection of the tomb,  
 And my prime passion in the grave

My old affection of the tomb,  
 A part of stillness, yearns to speak:  
 'Arise, and get thee forth and seek  
 A friendship for the years to come.

'I watch thee from the quiet shore;  
 Thy spirit up to mine can reach;  
 But in dear words of human speech  
 We two communicate no more.'

And I, 'Can clouds of nature stain  
 The starry clearness of the free?  
 How is it? Canst thou feel for me  
 Some painless sympathy with pain?'

And lightly does the whisper fall;  
 'Tis hard for thee to fathom this;  
 I triumph in conclusive bliss,  
 And that serene result of all.'

So hold I commerce with the dead;  
 Or so methinks the dead would  
 say;  
 Or so shall grief with symbols play  
 And pining life be fancy-fed.

Now looking to some settled end,  
 That these things pass, and I shall  
 prove  
 A meeting somewhere, love with  
 love,  
 I crave your pardon, O my friend;

If not so fresh, with love as true,  
 I, clasping brother-hands, aver  
 I could not, if I would, transfer  
 The whole I felt for him to you.

For which be they that hold apart  
 The promise of the golden hours?  
 First love, first friendship, equal  
 powers,  
 That marry with the virgin heart.

Still mine, that cannot but deplore,  
 That beats within a lonely place,  
 That yet remembers his embrace,  
 But at his footstep leaps no more,

My heart, tho' widow'd, may not rest  
 Quite in the love of what is gone,  
 But seeks to beat in time with one  
 That warms another living breast.



Ah, take the imperfect gift I bring,  
 Knowing the primrose yet is dear,  
 The primrose of the later year,  
 As not unlike to that of Spring.

## LXXXVI.

Sweet after showers, ambrosial air,  
 That rollest from the gorgeous  
 gloom  
 Of evening over brake and bloom  
 And meadow, slowly breathing bare

The round of space, and rapt below  
 Thro' all the dewy-tassell'd wood,  
 And shadowing down the horned  
 flood  
 In ripples, fan my brows and blow

The fever from my cheek, and sigh  
 The full new life that feeds thy  
 breath  
 Throughout my frame, till Doubt  
 and Death,  
 Ill brethren, let the fancy fly

From belt to belt of crimson seas  
 On leagues of odour streaming far,  
 To where in yonder orient star  
 A hundred spirits whisper 'Peace.'

## LXXXVII.

I past beside the reverend walls  
 In which of old I wore the gown;  
 I roved at random thro' the town,  
 And saw the tumult of the halls;

And heard once more in college fanes  
 The storm their high-built organs  
 make,  
 And thunder-music, rolling, shake  
 The prophet blazon'd on the panes;

And caught once more the distant shout,  
 The measured pulse of racing oars  
 Among the willows; paced the shores  
 And many a bridge, and all about

The same gray flats again, and felt  
 The same, but not the same; and  
 last  
 Up that long walk of limes I past  
 To see the rooms in which he dwelt.

Another name was on the door:  
 I linger'd; all within was noise  
 Of songs, and clapping hands, and  
 boys  
 That crash'd the glass and beat the floor;

Where once we held debate, a hand  
 Of youthful friends, on mind and  
 art,  
 And labour, and the changing  
 mart,  
 And all the framework of the land;

When one would aim an arrow fair,  
 But send it slackly from the string;  
 And one would pierce an outer  
 ring,  
 And one an inner, here and there;

And last the master-bowman, he,  
 Would cleave the mark. A willing  
 ear  
 We lent him. Who, but hung to  
 hear  
 The rapt oration flowing free

From point to point, with power and  
 grace  
 And music in the bounds of law,  
 To those conclusions when we saw  
 The God within him light his face,

And seem to lift the form, and glow  
 In azure orbits heavenly-wise;  
 And over those ethereal eyes  
 The bar of Michael Angelo.

## LXXXVIII.

Wild bird, whose warble, liquid sweet,  
 Rings Eden thro' the budded quicks,  
 O tell me where the senses mix,  
 O tell me where the passions meet,

Whence radiate: fierce extremes employ  
 Thy spirits in the darkening leaf,  
 And in the midmost heart of grief  
 Thy passion clasps a secret joy:

And I — my harp would prelude woe —  
 I cannot all command the strings;  
 The glory of the sam of things  
 Will flash along the chords and go.

## LXXXIX.

Witch-elms that counterchange the floor  
Of this flat lawn with dusk and  
bright;

And thou, with all thy breadth and  
height

Of foliage, towering sycamore;

How often, hither wandering down,  
My Arthur found your shadows fair,  
And shook to all the liberal air  
The dust and din and steam of town:

He brought an eye for all he saw;  
He mixt in all our simple sports;  
They pleased him, fresh from brawl-  
ing courts  
And dusty purlieus of the law.

O joy to him in this retreat,  
Immantled in ambrosial dark,  
To drink the cooler air, and mark  
The landscape winking thro' the heat:

O sound to rout the brood of cares,  
The sweep of scythe in morning  
dew,  
The gust that round the garden  
flew,  
And tumbled half the mellowing pears!

O bliss, when all in circle drawn  
About him, heart and ear were fed  
To hear him as he lay and read  
The Tuscan poets on the lawn:

Or in the all-golden afternoon  
A guest, or happy sister, sung,  
Or here she brought the harp and  
flung  
A ballad to the brightening moon:

Nor less it pleased in livelier moods,  
Beyond the bounding hill to stray,  
And break the livelong summer day  
With banquet in the distant woods;

Whereat we glanced from theme to  
theme,  
Discuss'd the books to love or hate,  
Or touch'd the changes of the state,  
Or threaded some Socratic dream;

But if I praised the busy town,  
He loved to rail against it still,  
For 'ground in yonder social mill  
We rub each other's angles down,

'And merge,' he said, 'in form and  
gloss  
The picturesque of man and man.'  
We talk'd: the stream beneath us  
ran,  
The wine-flask lying couch'd in moss,

Or cool'd within the glooming wave;  
And last, returning from afar,  
Before the crimson-circled star  
Had fall'n into her father's grave,

And brushing ankle-deep in flowers,  
We heard behind the woodbine veil  
The milk that bubbled in the pail,  
And buzzings of the honied hours.

## xc.

He tasted love with half his mind,  
Nor ever drank the inviolate spring  
Where nighest heaven, who first  
could fling  
This bitter seed among mankind;

That could the dead, whose dying eyes  
Were closed with wail, resume their  
life,  
They would but find in child and wife  
An iron welcome when they rise:

'Twas well, indeed, when warm with wine,  
To pledge them with a kindly tear,  
To talk them o'er, to wish them here,  
To count their memories half divine;

But if they came who past away,  
Behold their brides in other hands;  
The hard heir strides about their  
lands,  
And will not yield them for a day.

Yea, tho' their sons were none of these,  
Not less the yet-loved sire would  
make  
Confusion worse than death, and  
shake  
The pillars of domestic peace.

Ah dear, but come thou back to me :  
 Whatever change the years have  
 wrought,

I find not yet one lonely thought  
 That cries against my wish for thee.

## XCI.

When rosy plumelets tuft the larch,  
 And rarely pipes the mounted  
 thrush;

Or underneath the barren bush  
 Flits by the sea-blue bird of March;

Come, wear the form by which I know  
 Thy spirit in time among thy peers;  
 The hope of unaccomplish'd years  
 Be large and lucid round thy brow.

When summer's hourly-mellowing change  
 May breathe, with many roses sweet,  
 Upon the thousand waves of wheat,  
 That ripple round the lonely grange;

Come: not in watches of the night,  
 But where the sunbeam broodeth  
 warm,

Come, beauteous in thine after form,  
 And like a finer light in light.

## XCII.

If any vision should reveal  
 Thy likeness, I might count it vain  
 As but the canker of the brain;  
 Yea, tho' it spake and made appeal

To chances where our lots were cast  
 Together in the days behind,  
 I might but say, I hear a wind  
 Of memory murmuring the past.

Yea, tho' it spake and bared to view  
 A fact within the coming year;  
 And tho' the months, revolving near,  
 Should prove the phantom-warning true,

They might not seem thy prophecies,  
 But spiritual presentiments,  
 And such refraction of events  
 As often rises ere they rise.

## XCIII.

I shall not see thee. Dare I say  
 No spirit ever brake the band

That stays him from the native land  
 Where first he walk'd when claspt in clay?

No visual shade of some one lost,  
 But he, the Spirit himself, may come  
 Where all the nerve of sense is  
 numb;  
 Spirit to Spirit, Ghost to Ghost.

O, therefore from thy sightless range  
 With gods in unconjectured bliss,  
 O, from the distance of the abyss  
 Of tenfold-complicated change,

Descend, and touch, and enter; hear  
 The wish too strong for words to  
 name;  
 That in this blindness of the frame  
 My Ghost may feel that thine is near.

## XCIV.

How pure at heart and sound in head,  
 With what divine affections bold  
 Should be the man whose thought  
 would hold

An hour's communion with the dead.

In vain shalt thou, or any, call  
 The spirits from their golden day,  
 Except, like them, thou too canst say,  
 My spirit is at peace with all.

They haunt the silence of the breast,  
 Imaginations calm and fair,  
 The memory like a cloudless air,  
 The conscience as a sea at rest :

But when the heart is full of din,  
 And doubt beside the portal waits,  
 They can but listen at the gates,  
 And hear the household jar within.

## XCV.

By night we linger'd on the lawn,  
 For underfoot the herb was dry;  
 And genial warmth; and o'er the sky  
 The silvery haze of summer drawn;

And calm that let the tapers burn  
 Unwavering; not a cricket chirr'd:  
 The brook alone far-off was heard,  
 And on the board the fluttering urn :

And bats went round in fragrant skies,  
 And wheel'd or lit the filmy shapes  
 That haunt the dusk, with ermine  
 capes  
 And woolly breasts and beaded eyes;

While now we sang old songs that peal'd  
 From knoll to knoll, where, couch'd  
 at ease,  
 The white kine glimmer'd, and the  
 trees  
 Laid their dark arms about the field.

But when those others, one by one,  
 Withdrew themselves from me and  
 night,  
 And in the house light after light  
 Went out, and I was all alone,

A hunger seized my heart; I read  
 Of that glad year which once had  
 been,  
 In those fall'n leaves which kept their  
 green,  
 The noble letters of the dead:

And strangely on the silence broke  
 The silent-speaking words, and  
 strange  
 Was love's dumb cry defying change  
 To test his worth; and strangely spoke

The faith, the vigour, bold to dwell  
 On doubts that drive the coward  
 back,  
 And keen thro' wordy snares to track  
 Suggestion to her inmost cell.

So word by word, and line by line,  
 The dead man touch'd me from the  
 past,  
 And all at once it seem'd at last  
 The living soul was flash'd on mine,

And mine in this was wound, and whirl'd  
 About empyreal heights of thought,  
 And came on that which is, and  
 caught

The deep pulsations of the world,

Æonian music measuring out  
 The steps of Time — the shocks of  
 Chance —

The blows of Death. At length my  
 trance  
 Was cancell'd, stricken thro' with doubt.

Vague words! but ah, how hard to  
 frame  
 In matter-moulded forms of speech,  
 Or ev'n for intellect to reach  
 Thro' memory that which I became:

Till now the doubtful dusk reveal'd  
 The knolls once more where, couch'd  
 at ease,  
 The white kine glimmer'd, and the  
 trees  
 Laid their dark arms about the field:

And suck'd from out the distant gloom  
 A breeze began to tremble o'er  
 The large leaves of the sycamore,  
 And fluctuate all the still perfume,

And gathering freshlier overhead,  
 Rock'd the full-foliaged elms, and  
 swung  
 The heavy-folded rose, and flung  
 The lilies to and fro, and said,

'The dawn, the dawn,' and died away;  
 And East and West, without a  
 breath,  
 Mixt their dim lights, like life and  
 death,  
 To broaden into boundless day.

XCVI.

You say, but with no touch of scorn,  
 Sweet-hearted, you, whose light-blue  
 eyes  
 Are tender over drowning flies,  
 You tell me, doubt is Devil-born.

I know not: one indeed I knew  
 In many a subtle question versed,  
 Who touch'd a jarring lyre at first,  
 But ever strove to make it true:

Perplex in faith, but pure in deeds,  
 At last he beat his music out.  
 There lives more faith in honest  
 doubt,  
 Believe me, than in half the creeds.

He fought his doubts and gather'd  
 strength,  
 He would not make his judgment  
 blind,  
 He faced the spectres of the mind  
 And laid them: thus he came at length

To find a stronger faith his own;  
 And Power was with him in the  
 night,  
 Which makes the darkness and the  
 light,  
 And dwells not in the light alone,

But in the darkness and the cloud,  
 As over Sinai's peaks of old,  
 While Israel made their gods of gold,  
 Altho' the trumpet blew so loud.

## XCVII.

My love has talk'd with rocks and trees;  
 He finds on misty mountain-ground  
 His own vast shadow glory-crown'd;  
 He sees himself in all he sees.

Two partners of a married life —  
 I look'd on these and thought of thee  
 In vastness and in mystery,  
 And of my spirit as of a wife.

These two — they dwelt with eye on eye,  
 Their hearts of old have beat in tune,  
 Their meetings made December June,  
 Their every parting was to die.

Their love has never past away;  
 The days she never can forget  
 Are earnest that he loves her yet,  
 Whate'er the faithless people say.

Her life is lone, he sits apart,  
 He loves her yet, she will not weep,  
 Tho' rapt in matters dark and deep  
 He seems to slight her simple heart.

He thrids the labyrinth of the mind,  
 He reads the secret of the star,  
 He seems so near and yet so far,  
 He looks so cold: she thinks him kind.

She keeps the gift of years before,  
 A wither'd violet is her bliss:

She knows not what his greatness is,  
 For that, for all, she loves him more.

For him she plays, to him she sings  
 Of early faith and plighted vows;  
 She knows but matters of the house,  
 And he, he knows a thousand things.

Her faith is fixt and cannot move,  
 She darkly feels him great and wise,  
 She dwells on him with faithful eyes,  
 'I cannot understand: I love.'

## XCVIII.

You leave us: you will see the Rhine,  
 And those fair hills I sail'd below,  
 When I was there with him; and go  
 By summer belts of wheat and vine

To where he breathed his latest breath,  
 That City. All her splendour seems  
 No livelier than the wisp that gleams  
 On Lethe in the eyes of Death.

Let her great Danube rolling fair  
 Enwind her isles, unmark'd of me:  
 I have not seen, I will not see  
 Vienna; rather dream that there,

A treble darkness, Evil haunts  
 The birth, the bridal; friend from  
 friend  
 Is oftener parted, fathers bend  
 Above more graves, a thousand wants

Gnarr at the heels of men, and prey  
 By each cold hearth, and sadness  
 flings  
 Her shadow on the blaze of kings:  
 And yet myself have heard him say,

That not in any mother town  
 With statelier progress to and fro  
 The double tides of chariots flow  
 By park and suburb under brown

Of lustier leaves; nor more content,  
 He told me, lives in any crowd,  
 When all is gay with lamps, and  
 loud  
 With sport and song, in booth and  
 tent,

Imperial halls, or open plain,  
 And wheels the circled dance, and  
 breaks  
 The rocket molten into flakes  
 Of crimson or in emerald rain.

## XCIX.

Risest thou thus, dim dawn, again,  
 So loud with voices of the birds,  
 So thick with lowings of the herds,  
 Day, when I lost the flower of men;

Who tremblest thro' thy darkling red  
 On yon swoll'n brook that bubbles  
 fast  
 By meadows breathing of the past,  
 And woodlands holy to the dead;

Who murmurest in the foliaged eaves  
 A song that slights the coming  
 care,  
 And Autumn laying here and there  
 A fiery finger on the leaves;

Who wakenest with thy balmy breath  
 To myriads on the genial earth,  
 Memories of bridal, or of birth,  
 And unto myriads more, of death.

O wheresoever those may be,  
 Betwixt the slumber of the poles,  
 To-day they count as kindred souls;  
 They know me not, but mourn with me.

## C.

I climb the hill: from end to end  
 Of all the landscape underneath,  
 I find no place that does not breathe  
 Some gracious memory of my friend;

No gray old grange, or lonely fold,  
 Or low morass and whispering reed,  
 Or simple stile from mead to mead,  
 Or sheepwalk up the windy wold;

Nor hoary knoll of ash and haw  
 That hears the latest linnets trill,  
 Nor quarry trenched along the hill  
 And haunted by the wrangling daw;

Nor runlet tinkling from the rock;  
 Nor pastoral rivulet that swerves

To left and right thro' meadowy  
 curves,  
 That feed the mothers of the flock;

But each has pleased a kindred eye,  
 And each reflects a kindlier day;  
 And, leaving these, to pass away,  
 I think once more he seems to die.

## CI.

Unwatch'd, the garden bough shall sway,  
 The tender blossom flutter down,  
 Unloved, that beech will gather  
 brown,  
 This maple burn itself away;

Unloved, the sun-flower, shining fair,  
 Ray round with flames her disk of  
 seed,  
 And many a rose-carnation feed  
 With summer spice the humming air;

Unloved, by many a sandy bar,  
 The brook shall babble down the  
 plain,  
 At noon or when the lesser wain  
 Is twisting round the polar star;

Uncared for, gird the windy grove,  
 And flood the haunts of henn and  
 crake;  
 Or into silver arrows break  
 The sailing moon in creek and cove;

Till from the garden and the wild  
 A fresh association blow,  
 And year by year the landscape  
 grow  
 Familiar to the stranger's child;

As year by year the labourer tills  
 His wonted glebe, or lops the  
 glades;  
 - And year by year our memory fades  
 From all the circle of the hills.

## CII.

We leave the well-beloved place  
 Where first we gazed upon the sky;  
 The roofs, that heard our earliest  
 cry,  
 Will shelter one of stranger race.



We go, but ere we go from home,  
As down the garden-walks I move,  
Two spirits of a diverse love  
Contend for loving masterdom.

One whispers, 'Here thy boyhood sung  
Long since its matin song, and heard  
The low love-language of the bird  
In native hazels tassel-hung.'

The other answers, 'Yea, but here  
Thy feet have stray'd in after hours  
With thy lost friend among the  
bowers,  
And this hath made them trebly dear.'

These two have striven half the day,  
And each prefers his separate claim,  
Poor rivals in a losing game,  
That will not yield each other way.

I turn to go: my feet are set  
To leave the pleasant fields and  
farms;  
They mix in one another's arms  
To one pure image of regret.

## CIII.

On that last night before we went  
From out the doors where I was bred,  
I dream'd a vision of the dead,  
Which left my after-morn content.

Methought I dwelt within a hall,  
And maidens with me: distant hills  
From hidden summits fed with rills  
A river sliding by the wall.

The hall with harp and carol rang.  
They sang of what is wise and good  
And graceful. In the centre stood  
A statue veil'd, to which they sang;

And which, tho' veil'd, was known to me,  
The shape of him I loved, and love  
For ever: then flew in a dove  
And brought a summons from the sea:

And when they learnt that I must go  
They wept and wail'd, but led the  
way

To where a little shallop lay  
At anchor in the flood below;

And on by many a level mead,  
And shadowing bluff that made the  
banks,  
We glided winding under ranks  
Of iris, and the golden reed;

And still as vaster grew the shore  
And rolled the floods in grander  
space,  
The maidens gather'd strength and  
grace  
And presence, lordlier than before;

And I myself, who sat apart  
And watch'd them, wax'd in every  
limb;  
I felt the thews of Anakim,  
The pulses of a Titan's heart;

As one would sing the death of war,  
And one would chant the history  
Of that great race, which is to be,  
And one the shaping of a star;

Until the forward-creeping tides  
Began to foam, and we to draw  
From deep to deep, to where we saw  
A great ship lift her shining sides.

The man we loved was there on deck,  
But thrice as large as man he bent  
To greet us. Up the side I went,  
And fell in silence on his neck:

Whereat those maidens with one mind  
Bewail'd their lot; I did them wrong:  
'We served thee here,' they said,  
'so long,  
And wilt thou leave us now behind?'

So rapt I was, they could not win  
An answer from my lips, but he  
Replying, 'Enter likewise ye  
And go with us:' they enter'd in.

And while the wind began to sweep  
A music out of sheet and shroud,  
We steer'd her toward a crimson  
cloud  
That landlike slept along the deep.

## CIV.

The time draws near the birth of Christ;  
The moon is hid, the night is still;  
A single church below the hill  
Is pealing, folded in the mist.

A single peal of bells below,  
That wakens at this hour of rest  
A single murmur in the breast,  
That these are not the bells I know.

Like strangers' voices here they sound,  
In lands where not a memory strays,  
Nor landmark breathes of other days,  
But all is new unhallow'd ground.

## CV.

To-night ungather'd let us leave  
This laurel, let this holly stand:  
We live within the stranger's land,  
And strangely falls our Christmas-eve.

Our father's dust is left alone  
And silent under other snows:  
There in due time the woodbine  
blows,  
The violet comes, but we are gone.

No more shall wayward grief abuse  
The genial hour with mask and  
mime;  
For change of place, like growth of  
time,  
Has broke the bond of dying use.

Let cares that petty shadows cast,  
By which our lives are chiefly  
proved,  
A little spare the night I loved,  
And hold it solemn to the past.

But let no footstep beat the floor,  
Nor bowl of wassail mantle warm;  
For who would keep an ancient form  
Thro' which the spirit breathes no more?

Be neither song, nor game, nor feast;  
Nor harp be touch'd, nor flute be  
blown;  
No dance, no motion, save alone  
What lightens in the lucid east

Of rising worlds by yonder wood.  
Long sleeps the summer in the seed;  
Run out your measured arcs, and  
lead  
The closing cycle rich in good.

## CVI.

Ring out, wild bells, to the wild sky,  
The flying cloud, the frosty light:  
The year is dying in the night;  
Ring out, wild bells, and let him die.

Ring out the old, ring in the new,  
Ring, happy bells, across the snow:  
The year is going, let him go;  
Ring out the false, ring in the true.

Ring out the grief that saps the mind,  
For those that here we see no more;  
Ring out the feud of rich and poor,  
Ring in redress to all mankind.

Ring out a slowly dying cause,  
And ancient forms of party strife;  
Ring in the nobler modes of life,  
With sweeter manners, purer laws.

Ring out the want, the care, the sin,  
The faithless coldness of the times;  
Ring out, ring out my mournful  
rhymes,  
But ring the fuller minstrel in.

Ring out false pride in place and blood,  
The civic slander and the spite;  
Ring in the love of truth and right,  
Ring in the common love of good.

Ring out old shapes of foul disease;  
Ring out the narrowing lust of gold;  
Ring out the thousand wars of old,  
Ring in the thousand years of peace.

Ring in the valiant man and free,  
The larger heart, the kindlier hand;  
Ring out the darkness of the land,  
Ring in the Christ that is to be.

## CVII.

It is the day when he was born,  
A bitter day that early sank  
Behind a purple-frosty bank  
Of vapour, leaving night forlorn.

The time admits not flowers or leaves  
 To deck the banquet. Fiercely  
 flies  
 The blast of North and East, and  
 ice  
 Makes daggers at the sharpen'd eaves,  
 And bristles all the brakes and thorns  
 To yon hard crescent, as she hangs  
 Above the wood which grides and  
 clangs  
 Its leafless ribs and iron horns  
 Together, in the drifts that pass  
 To darken on the rolling brine  
 That breaks the coast. But fetch  
 the wine,  
 Arrange the board and brim the glass;  
 Bring in great logs and let them lie,  
 To make a solid core of heat;  
 Be cheerful-minded, talk and treat  
 Of all things ev'n as he were by;  
 We keep the day. With festal cheer,  
 With books and music, surely we  
 Will drink to him, whate'er he be,  
 And sing the songs he loved to hear.

## CVIII.

I will not shut me from my kind,  
 And, lest I stiffen into stone,  
 I will not eat my heart alone,  
 Nor feed with sighs a passing wind:  
 What profit lies in barren faith,  
 And vacant yearning, tho' with might  
 To scale the heaven's highest height,  
 Or dive below the wells of Death?  
 What find I in the highest place,  
 But mine own phantom chanting  
 hymns?  
 And on the depths of death there  
 swims  
 The reflex of a human face.  
 I'll rather take what fruit may be  
 Of sorrow under human skies:  
 'Tis held that sorrow makes us  
 wise,  
 Whatever wisdom sleep with thee.

T

## CIX.

Heart-affluence in discursive talk  
 From household fountains never  
 dry;  
 The critic clearness of an eye,  
 That saw thro' all the Muses' walk;  
 Seraphic intellect and force  
 To seize and throw the doubts of  
 man;  
 Impassion'd logic, which outran  
 The hearer in its fiery course;  
 High nature amorous of the good,  
 But touch'd with no ascetic gloom;  
 And passion pure in snowy bloom  
 Thro' all the years of April blood;  
 A love of freedom rarely felt,  
 Of freedom in her regal seat  
 Of England; not the schoolboy  
 heat,  
 The blind hysterics of the Celt;  
 And manhood fused with female grace  
 In such a sort, the child would twine  
 A trustful hand, unask'd, in thine,  
 And find his comfort in thy face;  
 All these have been, and thee mine eyes  
 Have look'd on: if they look'd in  
 vain,  
 My shame is greater who remain,  
 Nor let thy wisdom make me wise.

## CX.

Thy converse drew us with delight,  
 The men of rathe and riper years:  
 The feeble soul, a haunt of fears,  
 Forgot his weakness in thy sight.  
 On thee the loyal-hearted hung,  
 The proud was half disarm'd of  
 pride,  
 Nor cared the serpent at thy side  
 To flicker with his double tongue.  
 The stern were mild when thou wert by,  
 The flippant put himself to school  
 And heard thee, and the brazen fool  
 Was soften'd, and he knew not why;

While I, thy nearest, sat apart,  
 And felt thy triumph was as mine;  
 And loved them more, that they were  
 thine,  
 The graceful tact, the Christian art;

Nor mine the sweetness or the skill,  
 But mine the love that will not tire,  
 And, born of love, the vague desire  
 That spurs an imitative will.

## CXI.

The churl in spirit, up or down  
 Along the scale of ranks, thro' all,  
 To him who grasps a golden ball,  
 By blood a king, at heart a clown;

The churl in spirit, howe'er he veil  
 His want in forms for fashion's sake,  
 Will let his coltish nature break  
 At seasons thro' the gilded pale:

For who can always act? but he,  
 To whom a thousand memories call,  
 Not being less but more than all  
 The gentleness he seem'd to be,

Best seem'd the thing he was, and join'd  
 Each office of the social hour  
 To noble manners, as the flower  
 And native growth of noble mind;

Nor ever narrowness or spite,  
 Or villain fancy fleeting by,  
 Drew in the expression of an eye,  
 Where God and Nature met in light;

And thus he bore without abuse  
 The grand old name of gentleman,  
 Defamed by every charlatan,  
 And soil'd with all ignoble use.

## CXII.

High wisdom holds my wisdom less,  
 That I, who gaze with temperate eyes  
 On glorious insufficiencies,  
 Set light by narrower perfectness.

But thou, that fillest all the room  
 Of all my love, art reason why  
 I seem to cast a careless eye  
 On souls, the lesser lords of doom.

For what wert thou? some novel power  
 Sprang up for ever at a touch,  
 And hope could never hope too  
 much,  
 In watching thee from hour to hour,  
 Large elements in order brought,  
 And tracts of calm from tempest  
 made,  
 And world-wide fluctuation sway'd  
 In vassal tides that follow'd thought.

## CXIII.

'Tis held that sorrow makes us wise;  
 Yet how much wisdom sleeps with  
 thee

Which not alone had guided me,  
 But served the seasons that may rise;

For can I doubt, who knew thee keen  
 In intellect, with force and skill  
 To strive, to fashion, to fulfil —  
 I doubt not what thou wouldst have  
 been:

A life in civic action warm,  
 A soul on highest mission sent,  
 A potent voice of Parliament,  
 A pillar steadfast in the storm,

Should licensed boldness gather force,  
 Becoming, when the time has birth,  
 A lever to uplift the earth  
 And roll it in another course,

With thousand shocks that come and go,  
 With agonies, with energies,  
 With overthrowings, and with cries,  
 And undulations to and fro.

## CXIV.

Who loves not Knowledge? Who shall  
 rail  
 Against her beauty? May she mix  
 With men and prosper! Who shall  
 fix  
 Her pillars? Let her work prevail.

But on her forehead sits a fire:  
 She sets her forward countenance  
 And leaps into the future chance,  
 Submitting all things to desire.

Half-grown as yet, a child, and vain —  
 She cannot fight the fear of death.  
 What is she, cut from love and faith,  
 But some wild Pallas from the brain

Of Demons? fiery-hot to burst  
 All barriers in her onward race  
 For power. Let her know her place;  
 She is the second, not the first.

A higher hand must make her mild,  
 If all be not in vain; and guide  
 Her footsteps, moving side by side  
 With wisdom, like the younger child:

For she is earthly of the mind,  
 But Wisdom heavenly of the soul.  
 O friend, who camest to thy goal  
 So early, leaving me behind,

I would the great world grew like thee,  
 Who grewest not alone in power  
 And knowledge, but by year and  
 hour  
 In reverence and in charity.

## CXV.

Now fades the last long streak of snow,  
 Now burgeons every maze of quick  
 About the flowering squares, and  
 thick  
 By ashen roots the violets blow.

Now rings the woodland loud and long,  
 The distance takes a lovelier hue,  
 And drown'd in yonder living blue  
 The lark becomes a sightless song.

Now dance the lights on lawn and lea,  
 The flocks are whiter down the vale,  
 And milkier every milky sail  
 On winding stream 'or distant sea;

Where now the seamew pipes, or dives  
 In yonder greenening gleam, and fly  
 The happy birds, that change their  
 sky  
 To build and brood; that live their lives

From land to land; and in my breast  
 Spring wakens too; and my regret  
 Becomes an April violet,  
 And buds and blossoms like the rest.

## CXVI.

Is it, then, regret for buried time  
 That keenlier in sweet April wakes,  
 And meets the year, and gives and  
 takes  
 The colours of the crescent prime?

Not all: the songs, the stirring air,  
 The life re-orient out of dust,  
 Cry thro' the sense to hearten trust  
 In that which made the world so fair.

Not all regret: the face will shine  
 Upon me, while I muse alone;  
 And that dear voice, I once have  
 known,  
 Still speak to me of me and mine:

Yet less of sorrow lives in me  
 For days of happy commune dead;  
 Less yearning for the friendship  
 fled,  
 Than some strong bond which is to be.

## CXVII.

O days and hours, your work is this,  
 To hold me from my proper place,  
 A little while from his embrace,  
 For fuller gain of after bliss:

That out of distance might ensue  
 Desire of nearness doubly sweet;  
 And unto meeting when we meet,  
 Delight a hundredfold accrue,

For every grain of sand that runs,  
 And every span of shade that  
 steals,  
 And every kiss of toothed wheels,  
 And all the courses of the suns.

## CXVIII.

Contemplate all this work of Time,  
 The giant labouring in his youth;  
 Nor dream of human love and truth,  
 As dying Nature's earth and lime;

But trust that those we call the dead  
 Are breathers of an ampler day  
 For ever nobler ends. They say,  
 The solid earth whereon we tread

In tracts of fluent heat began,  
 And grew to seeming-random forms,  
 The seeming prey of cyclic storms,  
 Till at the last arose the man;

Who throve and branch'd from clime to  
 clime,  
 The herald of a higher race,  
 And of himself in higher place,  
 If so he type this work of time

Within himself, from more to more;  
 Or, crown'd with attributes of woe  
 Like glories, move his course, and  
 show  
 That life is not as idle ore,

But iron dug from central gloom,  
 And heated hot with burning fears,  
 And dipt in baths of hissing tears,  
 And batter'd with the shocks of doom

To shape and use. Arise and fly  
 The reeling Faun, the sensual feast;  
 Move upward, working out the beast,  
 And let the ape and tiger die.

## CXXIX.

Doors, where my heart was used to beat  
 So quickly, not as one that weeps  
 I come once more; the city sleeps;  
 I smell the meadow in the street;

I hear a chirp of birds; I see  
 Betwixt the black fronts long-with-  
 drawn  
 A light-blue lane of early dawn,  
 And think of early days and thee,

And bless thee, for thy lips are bland,  
 And bright the friendship of thine  
 eye;  
 And in my thoughts with scarce a  
 sigh  
 I take the pressure of thine hand.

## CXX.

I trust I have not wasted breath:  
 I think we are not wholly brain,  
 Magnetic mockeries; not in vain,  
 Like Paul with beasts, I fought with  
 Death;

Not only cunning casts in clay:  
 Let Science prove we are, and then  
 What matters Science unto men,  
 At least to me? I would not stay.

Let him, the wiser man who springs  
 Hereafter, up from childhood shape  
 His action like the greater ape,  
 But I was *born* to other things.

## CXXI.

Sad Hesper o'er the buried sun  
 And ready, thou, to die with him,  
 Thou watchest all things ever dim  
 And dimmer, and a glory done:

The team is loosen'd from the wain,  
 The boat is drawn upon the shore;  
 Thou listenest to the closing door,  
 And life is darken'd in the brain.

Bright Phosphor, fresher for the night,  
 By thee the world's great work is  
 heard  
 Beginning, and the wakeful bird;  
 Behind thee comes the greater light:

The market boat is on the stream,  
 And voices hail it from the brink;  
 Thou hear'st the village hammer  
 clink,  
 And see'st the moving of the team.

Sweet Hesper-Phosphor, double name  
 For what is one, the first, the last,  
 Thou, like my present and my  
 past,  
 Thy place is changed; thou art the same.

## CXXII.

Oh, wast thou with me, dearest, then,  
 While I rose up against my doom,  
 And yearn'd to burst the folded  
 gloom,  
 To bare the eternal Heavens again,

To feel once more, in placid awe,  
 The strong imagination roll  
 A sphere of stars about my soul,  
 In all her motion one with law;

If thou wert with me, and the grave  
 Divide us not, be with me now,



And enter in at breast and bro  
Till all my blood, a fuller wave,

Be quicken'd with a livelier breath,  
And like an inconsiderate boy,  
As in the former flash of joy,  
I slip the thoughts of life and death;

And all the breeze of Fancy blows,  
And every dew-drop paints a bow,  
The wizard lightnings deeply glow,  
And every thought breaks out a rose.

## CXXIII.

There rolls the deep where grew the tree.  
O earth, what changes hast thou  
seen!

There where the long street roars  
hath been  
The stillness of the central sea.

The hills are shadows, and they flow  
From form to form, and nothing  
stands;  
They melt like mist, the solid lands,  
Like clouds they shape themselves and  
go.

But in my spirit will I dwell,  
And dream my dream, and hold it  
true;  
For tho' my lips may breathe adieu,  
I cannot think the thing farewell.

## CXXIV.

That which we dare invoke to bless;  
Our dearest faith; our ghastliest  
doubt;  
He, They, One, All; within, with-  
out;  
The Power in darkness whom we guess;

I found Him not in world or sun,  
Or eagle's wing, or insect's eye;  
Nor thro' the questions men may  
try,  
The petty cobwebs we have spun :

If e'er when faith had fall'n asleep,  
I heard a voice, 'Believe no more'  
And heard an ever-breaking shore  
That tumbled in the Godless deep;

A warmth within the breast would melt  
The freezing reason's colder part,  
And like a man in wrath the heart  
Stood up and answer'd, 'I have felt.'

No, like a child in doubt and fear:  
But that blind clamour made me  
wise;  
Then was I as a child that cries,  
But, crying, knows his father near;

And what I am beheld again  
What is, and no man understands;  
And out of darkness came the  
hands  
That reach thro' nature, moulding men.

## CXXV.

Whatever I have said or sung,  
Some bitter notes my harp would  
give,  
Yea, tho' there often seem'd to live  
A contradiction on the tongue,

Yet Hope had never lost her youth;  
She did but look through dimmer  
eyes;  
Or Love but play'd with gracious  
lies,  
Because he felt so fix'd in truth :

And if the song were full of care,  
He breathed the spirit of the song;  
And if the words were sweet and  
strong  
He set his royal signet there;

Abiding with me till I sail  
To seek thee on the mystic deeps,  
And this electric force, that keeps  
A thousand pulses dancing, fail.

## CXXVI.

Love is and was my Lord and King,  
And in his presence I attend  
To hear the tidings of my friend,  
Which every hour his couriers bring.

Love is and was my King and Lord,  
And will be, tho' as yet I keep  
Within his court on earth, and sleep  
Encompass'd by his faithful guard,

And hear at times a sentinel  
 Who moves about from place to  
 place,  
 And whispers to the worlds of space,  
 In the deep night, that all is well.

## CXXVII.

And all is well, tho' faith and form  
 Be sunder'd in the night of fear;  
 Well roars the storm to those that  
 hear

A deeper voice across the storm,

Proclaiming social truth shall spread,  
 And justice, ev'n tho' thrice again  
 The red fool-fury of the Seine  
 Should pile her barricades with dead.

But ill for him that wears a crown,  
 And him, the lazar, in his rags:  
 They tremble, the sustaining crags;  
 The spires of ice are toppled down,

And molten up, and roar in flood;  
 The fortress crashes from on high,  
 The brute earth lightens to the sky,  
 And the great Æon sinks in blood,

And compass'd by the fires of Hell;  
 While thou, dear spirit, happy star,  
 O'erlook'st the tumult from afar,  
 And smilest, knowing all is well.

## CXXVIII.

The love that rose on stronger wings,  
 Unpalsied when he met with Death,  
 Is comrade of the lesser faith  
 That sees the course of human things.

No doubt vast eddies in the flood  
 Of onward time shall yet be made,  
 And throned races may degrade;  
 Yet O ye mysteries of good,

Wild Hours that fly with Hope and Fear,  
 If all your office had to do  
 With old results that look like new;  
 If this were all your mission here,

To draw, to sheathe a useless sword,  
 To fool the crowd with glorious lies,  
 To cleave a creed in sects and cries,  
 To change the bearing of a word,

To shift an arbitrary power,  
 To cramp the student at his desk,  
 To make old bareness picturesque,  
 And tuft with grass a feudal tower;

Why then my scorn might well descend  
 On you and yours. I see in part  
 That all, as in some piece of art,  
 Is toil coöperant to an end.

## CXXIX.

Dear friend, far off, my lost desire,  
 So far, so near in woe and weal;  
 O loved the most, when most I feel  
 There is a lower and a higher;

Known and unknown; human, divine;  
 Sweet human hand and lips and eye;  
 Dear heavenly friend that canst not  
 die,

Mine, mine, for ever, ever mine;

Strange friend, past, present, and to be;  
 Loved deeper, darker understood;  
 Behold, I dream a dream of good,  
 And mingle all the world with thee.

## CXXX.

Thy voice is on the rolling air;  
 I hear thee where the waters run;  
 Thou standest in the rising sun,  
 And in the setting thou art fair.

What art thou then? I cannot guess;  
 But tho' I seem in star and flower  
 To feel thee some diffusive power,  
 I do not therefore love thee less:

My love involves the love before;  
 My love is vaster passion now;  
 Tho' mix'd with God and Nature  
 thou,  
 I seem to love thee more and more.

Far off thou art, but ever nigh;  
 I have thee still, and I rejoice;  
 I prosper, circled with thy voice;  
 I shall not lose thee tho' I die.

## CXXXI.

O living will that shalt endure  
 When all that seems shall suffer  
 shock,

Rise in the spiritual rock,  
Flow thro' our deeds and make them pure,

That we may lift from out of dust  
A voice as unto him that hears,  
A cry above the conquer'd years  
To one that with us works, and trust,

With faith that comes of self-control,  
The truths that never can be proved  
Until we close with all we loved,  
And all we flow from, soul in soul.

O true and tried, so well and long,  
Demand not thou a marriage lay;  
In that it is thy marriage day  
Is music more than any song.

Nor have I felt so much of bliss  
Since first he told me that he loved  
A daughter of our house; nor proved  
Since that dark day a day like this;

Tho' I since then have number'd o'er  
Some thrice three years: they went  
and came,  
Remade the blood and changed the  
frame,  
And yet is love not less, but more;

No longer caring to embalm  
In dying songs a dead regret,  
But like a statue solid-set,  
And moulded in colossal calm.

Regret is dead, but love is more  
Than in the summers that are flown,  
For I myself with these have grown  
To something greater than before;

Which makes appear the songs I made  
As echoes out of weaker times,  
As half but idle brawling rhymes,  
The sport of random sun and shade.

But where is she, the bridal flower,  
That must be made a wife ere noon?  
She enters, glowing like the moon  
Of Eden on its bridal bower:

On me she bends her blissful eyes  
And then on thee; they meet thy look

And brighten like the star that shook  
Betwixt the palms of paradise.

O when her life was yet in bud,  
He too foretold the perfect rose.  
For thee she grew, for thee she grows  
For ever, and as fair as good.

And thou art worthy; full of power;  
As gentle; liberal-minded, great,  
Consistent; wearing all that weight  
Of learning lightly like a flower.

But now set out: the noon is near,  
And I must give away the bride;  
She fears not, or with thee beside  
And me behind her will not fear:

For I that danced her on my knee,  
That watch'd her on her nurse's arm,  
That shielded all her life from harm  
At last must part with her to thee;

Now waiting to be made a wife,  
Her feet, my darling, on the dead;  
Their pensive tablets round her head,  
And the most living words of life

Breathed in her ear. The ring is on,  
The 'wilt thou' answer'd, and again  
The 'wilt thou' ask'd, till out of twain  
Her sweet 'I will' has made you one.

Now sign your names, which shall be read,  
Mute symbols of a joyful morn,  
By village eyes as yet unborn;  
The names are sign'd, and overhead

Begins the clash and clang that tells  
The joy to every wandering breeze;  
The blind wall rocks, and on the trees  
The dead leaf trembles to the bells.

O happy hour, and happier hours  
Await them. Many a merry face  
Salutes them — maidens of the place,  
That pelt us in the porch with flowers.

O happy hour, behold the bride  
With him to whom her hand I gave.  
They leave the porch, they pass the  
grave  
That has to-day its sunny side.

To-day the grave is bright for me,  
 For them the light of life increased,  
 Who stay to share the morning feast,  
 Who rest to-night beside the sea.

Let all my genial spirits advance  
 To meet and greet a whiter sun;  
 My drooping memory will not shun  
 The foaming grape of eastern France.

It circles round, and fancy plays,  
 And hearts are warm'd and faces  
 bloom,  
 As drinking health to bride and  
 groom  
 We wish them store of happy days.

Nor count me all to blame if I  
 Conjecture of a stiller guest,  
 Perchance, perchance, among the rest,  
 And, tho' in silence, wishing joy.

But they must go, the time draws on,  
 And those white-favour'd horses wait;  
 They rise, but linger; it is late;  
 Farewell, we kiss, and they are gone.

A shade falls on us like the dark  
 From little cloudlets on the grass,  
 But sweeps away as out we pass  
 To range the woods, to roam the park,

Discussing how their courtship grew,  
 And talk of others that are wed,  
 And how she look'd, and what he said,  
 And back we come at fall of dew.

Again the feast, the speech, the glee,  
 The shade of passing thought, the  
 wealth  
 Of words and wit, the double health,  
 The crowning cup, the three-times-three,

And last the dance; — till I retire:  
 Dumb is that tower which spake so  
 loud,  
 And high in heaven the streaming  
 cloud,  
 And on the downs a rising fire:

And rise, O moon, from yonder down,  
 Till over down and over dale  
 All night the shining vapour sail  
 And pass the silent-lighted town,

The white-faced halls, the glancing rills,  
 And catch at every mountain head,  
 And o'er the friths that branch and  
 spread  
 Their sleeping silver thro' the hills;

And touch with shade the bridal doors,  
 With tender gloom the roof, the  
 wall;  
 And breaking let the splendour fall  
 To spangle all the happy shores

By which they rest, and ocean sounds,  
 And, star and system rolling past,  
 A soul shall draw from out the vast  
 And strike his being into bounds,

And, moved thro' life of lower phase,  
 Result in man, be born and think,  
 And act and love, a closer link  
 Betwixt us and the crowning race

Of those that, eye to eye, shall look  
 On knowledge; under whose com-  
 mand  
 Is Earth and Earth's, and in their  
 hand  
 Is Nature like an open book;

No longer half-akin to brute,  
 For all we thought and loved and  
 did,  
 And hoped, and suffer'd, is but seed  
 Of what in them is flower and fruit;

Whereof the man, that with me trod  
 This planet, was a noble type  
 Appearing ere the times were ripe,  
 That friend of mine who lives in God,

That God, which ever lives and loves,  
 One God, one law, one element,  
 And one far-off divine event,  
 To which the whole creation moves.

## MAUD; A MONODRAMA.

## PART I.

## I.

## I.

I HATE the dreadful hollow behind the little wood,  
 Its lips in the field above are dappled with blood-red heath,  
 The red-ribb'd ledges drip with a silent horror of blood,  
 And Echo there, whatever is ask'd her, answers 'Death.'

## II.

For there in the ghastly pit long since a body was found,  
 His who had given me life — O father! O God! was it well? —  
 Mangled, and flatten'd, and crush'd, and dented into the ground:  
 There yet lies the rock that fell with him when he fell.

## III.

Did he fling himself down? who knows? for a vast speculation had fail'd,  
 And ever he mutter'd and madden'd, and ever wann'd with despair,  
 And out he walk'd when the wind like a broken worldling wail'd,  
 And the flying gold of the ruin'd woodlands drove thro' the air.

## IV.

I remember the time, for the roots of my hair were stirr'd  
 By a shuffled step, by a dead weight trail'd, by a whisper'd fright,  
 And my pulses closed their gates with a shock on my heart as I heard  
 The shrill-edged shriek of a mother divide the shuddering night.

## V.

Villainy somewhere! whose? One says, we are villains all.  
 Not he; his honest fame should at least by me be maintained:  
 But that old man, now lord of the broad estate and the Hall,  
 Dropt off gorged from a scheme that had left us flaccid and drain'd.

## VI.

Why do they prate of the blessings of Peace? we have made them a curse,  
 Pickpockets, each hand lusting for all that is not its own;  
 And lust of gain, in the spirit of Cain, is it better or worse  
 Than the heart of the citizen hissing in war on his own hearthstone?

## VII.

But these are the days of advance, the works of the men of mind,  
 When who but a fool would have faith in a tradesman's ware or his word?  
 Is it peace or war? Civil war, as I think, and that of a kind  
 The viler, as underhand, not openly bearing the sword.

## VIII.

Sooner or later I too may passively take the print  
Of the golden age — why not? I have neither hope nor trust;  
May make my heart as a millstone, set my face as a flint,  
Cheat and be cheated, and die: who knows? we are ashes and dust.

## IX.

Peace sitting under her olive, and slurring the days gone by,  
When the poor are hovell'd and hustled together, each sex, like swine.  
When only the ledger lives, and when only not all men lie;  
Peace in her vineyard — yes! — but a company forges the wine.

## X.

And the vitriol madness flushes up in the ruffian's head,  
Till the filthy by-lane rings to the yell of the trampled wife,  
And chalk and alum and plaster are sold to the poor for bread,  
And the spirit of murder works in the very means of life,

## XI.

And Sleep must lie down arm'd, for the villainous centre-bits  
Grind on the wakeful ear in the hush of the moonless nights,  
While another is cheating the sick of a few last gasps, as he sits  
To pestle a poison'd poison behind his crimson lights.

## XII.

When a Mammonite mother kills her babe for a burial fee,  
And Timour-Mammon grins on a pile of children's bones,  
Is it peace or war? better, war! loud war by land and by sea,  
War with a thousand battles, and shaking a hundred thrones.

## XIII.

For I trust if an enemy's fleet came yonder round by the hill,  
And the rushing battle-boat sang from the three-decker out of the foam,  
That the smooth-faced snubnosed rogue would leap from his counter and till,  
And strike, if he could, were it but with his cheating yardwand, home. —

## XIV.

What! am I raging alone as my father raged in his mood?  
Must I too creep to the hollow and dash myself down and die  
Rather than hold by the law that I made, nevermore to brood  
On a horror of shatter'd limbs and a wretched swindler's lie?

## XV.

Would there be sorrow for *me*? there was *love* in the passionate shriek,  
Love for the silent thing that had made false haste to the grave —  
Wrapt in a cloak, as I saw him, and thought he would rise and speak  
And rave at the lie and the liar, ah God, as he used to rave.

## XVI.

I am sick of the Hall and the hill, I am sick of the moor and the main.  
 Why should I stay? can a sweeter chance ever come to me here?  
 O, having the nerves of motion as well as the nerves of pain,  
 Were it not wise if I fled from the place and the pit and the fear?

## XVII.

Workmen up at the Hall! — they are coming back from abroad;  
 The dark old place will be gilt by the touch of a millionaire:  
 I have heard, I know not whence, of the singular beauty of Maud;  
 I play'd with the girl when a child; she promised then to be fair.

## XVIII.

Maud with her venturous climbings and tumbles and childish escapes,  
 Maud the delight of the village, the ringing joy of the Hall,  
 Maud with her sweet purse-mouth when my father dangled the grapes,  
 Maud the beloved of my mother, the moon-faced darling of all, —

## XIX.

What is she now? My dreams are bad. She may bring me a curse.  
 No, there is fatter game on the moor: she will let me alone.  
 Thanks, for the fiend best knows whether woman or man be the worse.  
 I will bury myself in myself, and the Devil may pipe to his own.

## II.

Long have I sigh'd for a calm: God grant I may find it at last!  
 It will never be broken by Maud, she has neither savour nor salt,  
 But a cold and clear-cut face, as I found when her carriage past,  
 Perfectly beautiful: let it be granted her: where is the fault?  
 All that I saw (for her eyes were downcast, not to be seen)  
 Faultily faultless, icily regular, splendidly null,  
 Dead perfection, no more; nothing more, if it had not been  
 For a chance of travel, a paleness, an hour's defect of the rose,  
 Or an underlip, you may call it a little too ripe, too full,  
 Or the least little delicate aquiline curve in a sensitive nose,  
 From which I escaped heart-free, with the least little touch of spleen,

## III.

Cold and clear-cut face, why come you so cruelly meek,  
 Breaking a slumber in which all spleenful folly was drown'd,  
 Pale with the golden beam of an eyelash dead on the cheek,  
 Passionless, pale, cold face, star-sweet on a gloom profound;  
 Womanlike, taking revenge too deep for a transient wrong  
 Done but in thought to your beauty, and ever as pale as before  
 Growing and fading and growing upon me without a sound,  
 Luminous, gemlike, ghostlike, deathlike, half the night long  
 Growing and fading and growing, till I could bear it no more,  
 But arose, and all by myself in my own dark garden ground,



Listening now to the tide in its broad-flung shipwrecking roar,  
 Now to the scream of a madden'd beach dragg'd down by the wave,  
 Walk'd in a wintry wind by a ghastly glimmer, and found  
 The shining daffodil dead, and Orion low in his grave.

## IV.

## I.

A million emeralds break from the ruby-budded lime  
 In the little grove where I sit — ah, wherefore cannot I be  
 Like things of the season gay, like the bountiful season bland,  
 When the far-off sail is blown by the breeze of a softer clime,  
 Half-lost in the liquid azure bloom of a crescent of sea,  
 The silent sapphire-spangled marriage ring of the land?

## II.

Below me, there, is the village, and looks how quiet and small!  
 And yet bubbles o'er like a city, with gossip, scandal, and spite;  
 And Jack on his ale-house bench has as many lies as a Czar;  
 And here on the landward side, by a red rock, glimmers the Hall;  
 And up in the high Hall-garden I see her pass like a light;  
 But sorrow seize me if ever that light be my leading star!

## III.

When have I bow'd to her father, the wrinkled head of the race?  
 I met her to-day with her brother, but not to her brother I bow'd:  
 I bow'd to his lady-sister as she rode by on the moor;  
 But the fire of a foolish pride flash'd over her beautiful face.  
 O child, you wrong your beauty, believe it, in being so proud;  
 Your father has wealth well-gotten, and I am nameless and poor.

## IV.

I keep but a man and a maid, ever ready to slander and steal;  
 I know it, and smile a hard-set smile, like a stoic, or like  
 A wiser epicurean, and let the world have its way:  
 For nature is one with rapine, a harm no preacher can heal;  
 The Mayfly is torn by the swallow, the sparrow spear'd by the shrike,  
 And the whole little wood where I sit is a world of plunder and prey.

## V.

We are puppets, Man in his pride, and Beauty fair in her flower;  
 Do we move ourselves, or are moved by an unseen hand at a game  
 That pushes us off from the board, and others ever succeed?  
 Ah yet, we cannot be kind to each other here for an hour;  
 We whisper, and hint, and chuckle, and grin at a brother's shame;  
 However we brave it out, we men are a little breed.

## VI.

A monstrous eft was of old the Lord and Master of Earth,  
 For him did his high sun flame, and his river billowing ran,

And he felt himself in his force to be Nature's crowning race.  
As nine months go to the shaping an infant ripe for his birth,  
So many a million of ages have gone to the making of man:  
He now is first, but is he the last? is he not too base?

## VII.

The man of science himself is fonder of glory, and vain,  
An eye well-practised in nature, a spirit bounded and poor;  
The passionate heart of the poet is whirl'd into folly and vice.  
I would not marvel at either, but keep a temperate brain;  
For not to desire or admire, if a man could learn it, were more  
Than to walk all day like the sultan of old in a garden of spice.

## VIII.

For the drift of the Maker is dark, an Isis hid by the veil.  
Who knows the ways of the world, how God will bring them about?  
Our planet is one, the suns are many, the world is wide.  
Shall I weep if a Poland fall? shall I shriek if a Hungary fail?  
Or an infant civilisation be ruled with rod or with knout?  
I have not made the world, and He that made it will guide.

## IX.

Be mine a philosopher's life in the quiet woodland ways,  
Where if I cannot be gay let a passionless peace be my lot,  
Far-off from the clamour of liars belied in the hubbub of lies;  
From the long-neck'd geese of the world that are ever hissing dispraise  
Because their natures are little, and, whether he heed it or not,  
Where each man walks with his head in a cloud of poisonous flies.

## X.

And most of all would I flee from the cruel madness of love,  
The honey of poison-flowers and all the measureless ill.  
Ah Maud, you milkwhite fawn, you are all unmeet for a wife.  
Your mother is mute in her grave as her image in marble above;  
Your father is ever in London, you wander about at your will;  
You have but fed on the roses and lain in the lilies of life.

## V.

## I.

A voice by the cedar tree  
In the meadow under the Hall!  
She is singing an air that is known to me,  
A passionate ballad gallant and gay,  
A martial song like a trumpet's call!  
Singing alone in the morning of life,  
In the happy morning of life and of May,  
Singing of men that in battle array,  
Ready in heart and ready in hand,  
March with banner and bugle and fife  
To the death, for their native land.

## II.

Maud with her exquisite face,  
And wild voice pealing up to the sunny  
sky,  
And feet like sunny gems on an English  
green,  
Maud in the light of her youth and her  
grace,  
Singing of Death, and of Honour that  
cannot die,  
Till I well could weep for a time so sordid  
and mean,  
And myself so languid and base.

## III.

Silence, beautiful voice !  
 Be still, for you only trouble the mind  
 With a joy in which I cannot rejoice,  
 A glory I shall not find.  
 Still ! I will hear you no more,  
 For your sweetness hardly leaves me a  
                   choice  
 But to move to the meadow and fall before  
 Her feet on the meadow grass, and adore,  
 Not her, who is neither courtly nor kind,  
 Not her, not her, but a voice.

## VI.

## I.

Morning arises stormy and pale,  
 No sun, but a wannish glare  
 In fold upon fold of hueless cloud,  
 And the budded peaks of the wood are  
                   bow'd  
 Caught and cuff'd by the gale :  
 I had fancied it would be fair.

## II.

Whom but Maud should I meet  
 Last night, when the sunset burn'd  
 On the blossom'd gable-ends  
 At the head of the village street,  
 Whom but Maud should I meet?  
 And she touch'd my hand with a smile so  
                   sweet,  
 She made me divine amends  
 For a courtesy not return'd.

## III.

And thus a delicate spark  
 Of glowing and growing light  
 Thro' the livelong hours of the dark  
 Kept itself warm in the heart of my  
                   dreams,  
 Ready to burst in a colour'd flame ;  
 Till at last when the morning came  
 In a cloud, it faded, and seems  
 But an ashen-gray delight.

## IV.

What if with her sunny hair,  
 And smile as sunny as cold,  
 She meant to weave me a snare  
 Of some coquettish deceit,

Cleopatra-like as of old  
 To entangle me when we met,  
 To have her lion roll in a silken net  
 And fawn at a victor's feet.

## V.

Ah, what shall I be at fifty  
 Should Nature keep me alive,  
 If I find the world so bitter  
 When I am but twenty-five?  
 Yet, if she were not a cheat,  
 If Maud were all that she seem'd,  
 And her smile were all that I dream'd,  
 Then the world were not so bitter  
 But a smile could make it sweet.

## VI.

What if tho' her eye seem'd full  
 Of a kind intent to me,  
 What if that dandy-despot, he,  
 That jewell'd mass of millinery,  
 That oil'd and curl'd Assyrian Bull  
 Smelling of musk and of insolence,  
 Her brother, from whom I keep aloof,  
 Who wants the finer politic sense  
 To mask, tho' but in his own behoof,  
 With a glassy smile his brutal scorn —  
 What if he had told her yestermorn  
 How prettily for his own sweet sake  
 A face of tenderness might be feign'd,  
 And a moist mirage in desert eyes,  
 That so, when the rotten hustings shake  
 In another month to his brazen lies,  
 A wretched vote may be gain'd.

## VII.

For a raven ever croaks, at my side,  
 Keep watch and ward, keep watch and  
                   ward,  
 Or thou wilt prove their tool.  
 Yea, too, myself from myself I guard,  
 For often a man's own angry pride  
 Is cap and bells for a fool.

## VIII.

Perhaps the smile and tender tone  
 Came out of her pitying womanhood,  
 For am I not, am I not, here alone  
 So many a summer since she died,  
 My mother, who was so gentle and good?  
 Living alone in an empty house,  
 Here half-hid in the gleaming wood,

Where I hear the dead at midday  
 moan,  
 And the shrieking rush of the wainscot  
 mouse,  
 And my own sad name in corners  
 cried,  
 When the shiver of dancing leaves is  
 thrown  
 About its echoing chambers wide,  
 Till a morbid hate and horror have  
 grown  
 Of a world in which I have hardly mixt,  
 And a morbid eating lichen fixt  
 On a heart half-turn'd to stone.

## IX.

O heart of stone, are you flesh, and caught  
 By that you swore to withstand?  
 For what was it else within me wrought  
 But, I fear, the new strong wine of  
 love,  
 That made my tongue so stammer and  
 trip  
 When I saw the treasured splendour, her  
 hand,  
 Come sliding out of her sacred glove,  
 And the sunlight broke from her lip?

## X.

I have play'd with her when a child;  
 She remembers it now we meet.  
 Ah well, well, well, I *may* be beguiled  
 By some coquettish deceit.  
 Yet, if she were not a cheat,  
 If Maud were all that she seem'd,  
 And her smile had all that I dream'd,  
 Then the world were not so bitter  
 But a smile could make it sweet.

## VII.

## I.

Did I hear it half in a doze  
 Long since, I know not where?  
 Did I dream it an hour ago,  
 When asleep in this arm-chair?

## II.

Men were drinking together,  
 Drinking and talking of me;  
 'Well, if it prove a girl, the boy  
 Will have plenty: so let it be.'

## III.

Is it an echo of something  
 Read with a boy's delight,  
 Viziers nodding together  
 In some Arabian night?

## IV.

Strange, that I hear two men,  
 Somewhere, talking of me;  
 'Well, if it prove a girl, my boy  
 Will have plenty: so let it be.'

## VIII.

She came to the village church,  
 And sat by a pillar alone;  
 An angel watching an urn  
 Wept over her, carved in stone;  
 And once, but once, she lifted her eyes,  
 And suddenly, sweetly, strangely blush'd  
 To find they were met by my own;  
 And suddenly, sweetly, my heart beat  
 stronger  
 And thicker, until I heard no longer  
 The snowy-banded, dilettante,  
 Delicate-handed priest intone;  
 And thought, is it pride, and mused and  
 sigh'd  
 'No surely, now it cannot be pride.'

## IX.

I was walking a mile,  
 More than a mile from the shore,  
 The sun look'd out with a smile  
 Betwixt the cloud and the moor  
 And riding at set of day  
 Over the dark moor land,  
 Rapidly riding far away,  
 She waved to me with her hand.  
 There were two at her side,  
 Something flash'd in the sun,  
 Down by the hill I saw them ride,  
 In a moment they were gone:  
 Like a sudden spark  
 Struck vainly in the night,  
 Then returns the dark  
 With no more hope of light.

## X.

## I.

Sick, am I sick of a jealous dread?  
 Was not one of the two at her side

This new-made lord, whose splendour  
plucks  
The slavish hat from the villager's head?  
Whose old grandfather has lately died,  
Gone to a blacker pit, for whom  
Grimy nakedness dragging his trucks  
And laying his trams in a poison'd gloom  
Wrought, till he crept from a gutted  
mine

Master of half a servile shire,  
And left his coal all turn'd into gold  
To a grandson, first of his noble line,  
Rich in the grace all women desire,  
Strong in the power that all men adore,  
And simper and set their voices lower,  
And soften as if to a girl, and hold  
Awe-stricken breaths at a work divine,  
Seeing his gewgaw castle shine,  
New as his title, built last year,  
There amid perky larches and pine,  
And over the sullen-purple moor  
(Look at it) pricking a cockney ear.

## II.

What, has he found my jewel out?  
For one of the two that rode at her side  
Bound for the Hall, I am sure was he:  
Bound for the Hall, and I think for a  
bride.

Blithe would her brother's acceptance be.  
Maud could be gracious too, no doubt  
To a lord, a captain, a padded shape,  
A bought commission, a waxen face,  
A rabbit mouth that is ever agape—  
Bought? what is it he cannot buy?  
And therefore splenetic, personal, base,  
A wounded thing with a rancorous cry,  
At war with myself and a wretched race,  
Sick, sick to the heart of life, am I.

## III.

Last week came one to the country town,  
To preach our poor little army down,  
And play the game of the despot kings,  
Tho' the state has done it and thrice  
as well:

This broad-brimm'd hawkler of holy  
things,  
Whose ear is cramm'd with his cotton,  
and rings  
Even in dreams to the chink of his pence,  
This huckster put down war! can he tell

Whether war be a cause or a consequence?  
Put down the passions that make earth  
Hell!

Down with ambition, avarice, pride,  
Jealousy, down! cut off from the mind  
The bitter springs of anger and fear;  
Down too, down at your own fireside,  
With the evil tongue and the evil ear,  
For each is at war with mankind.

## IV.

I wish I could hear again  
The chivalrous battle-song  
That she warbled alone in her joy!  
I might persuade myself then  
She would not do herself this great wrong,  
To take a wanton dissolute boy  
For a man and leader of men.

## V.

Ah God, for a man with heart, head,  
hand,  
Like some of the simple great ones gone  
For ever and ever by,  
One still strong man in a blatant land,  
Whatever they call him, what care I,  
Aristocrat, democrat, autocrat— one  
Who can rule and dare not lie.

## VI.

And ah for a man to arise in me,  
That the man I am may cease to be!

## XI.

## I.

O let the solid ground  
Not fail beneath my feet  
Before my life has found  
What some have found so sweet;  
Then let come what come may,  
What matter if I go mad,  
I shall have had my day.

## II.

Let the sweet heavens endure,  
Not close and darken above me  
Before I am quite quite sure  
That there is one to love me;  
Then let come what come may  
To a life that has been so sad,  
I shall have had my day.

## XII.

## I.

Birds in the high Hall-garden  
When twilight was falling,  
Maud, Maud, Maud, Maud,  
They were crying and calling.

## II.

Where was Maud? in our wood;  
And I, who else, was with her,  
Gathering woodland lilies,  
Myriads blow together.

## III.

Birds in our wood sang  
Ringing thro' the valleys,  
Maud is here, here, here  
In among the lilies.

## IV.

I kiss'd her slender hand,  
She took the kiss sedately;  
Maud is not seventeen,  
But she is tall and stately.

## V.

I to cry out on pride  
Who have won her favour!  
O Maud were sure of Heaven  
If lowliness could save her.

## VI.

I know the way she went  
Home with her maiden posy,  
For her feet have touch'd the meadows  
And left the daisies rosy.

## VII.

Birds in the high Hall-garden  
Were crying and calling to her,  
Where is Maud, Maud, Maud?  
One is come to woo her.

## VIII.

Look, a horse at the door,  
And little King Charley snarling,  
Go back, my lord, across the moor,  
You are not her darling.

## XIII.

## I.

Scorn'd, to be scorn'd by one that I scorn,  
Is that a matter to make me fret?  
That a calamity hard to be borne?  
Well, he may live to hate me yet.  
Fool that I am to be vext with his pride!  
I past him, I was crossing his lands;  
He stood on the path a little aside;  
His face, as I grant, in spite of spite,  
Has a broad-blown comeliness, red and  
white,  
And six feet two, as I think, he stands;  
But his essences turn'd the live air sick,  
And barbarous opulence jewel-thick  
Sunn'd itself on his breast and his hands.

## II.

Who shall call me ungentle, unfair,  
I long'd so heartily then and there  
To give him the grasp of fellowship;  
But while I past he was humming an air,  
Stopt, and then with a riding whip  
Leisurely tapping a glossy boot,  
And curving a contumelious lip,  
Gorgonised me from head to foot  
With a stony British stare.

## III.

Why sits he here in his father's chair?  
That old man never comes to his place:  
Shall I believe him ashamed to be seen?  
For only once, in the village street,  
Last year, I caught a glimpse of his face,  
A gray old wolf and a lean.  
Scarcely, now, would I call him a cheat;  
For then, perhaps, as a child of deceit,  
She might by a true descent be untrue;  
And Maud is as true as Maud is sweet:  
Tho' I fancy her sweetness only due  
To the sweeter blood by the other side;  
Her mother has been a thing complete,  
However she came to be so allied.  
And fair without, faithful within,  
Maud to him is nothing akin:  
Some peculiar mystic grace  
Made her only the child of her mother,  
And heap'd the whole inherited sin  
On that huge scapegoat of the race,  
All, all upon the brother.

## IV.

Peace, angry spirit, and let him be!  
Has not his sister smiled on me?

## XIV.

## I.

Maud has a garden of roses  
And lilies fair on a lawn;  
There she walks in her state  
And tends upon bed and bower,  
And thither I climb'd at dawn  
And stood by her garden-gate;  
A lion ramps at the top,  
He is claspt by a passion-flower.

## II.

Maud's own little oak-room  
(Which Maud, like a precious stone  
Set in the heart of the carven gloom,  
Lights with herself, when alone  
She sits by her music and books  
And her brother lingers late  
With a roystering company) looks  
Upon Maud's own garden-gate:  
And I thought as I stood, if a hand, as  
white  
As ocean-foam in the moon, were laid  
On the hasp of the window, and my  
Delight  
Had a sudden desire, like a glorious ghost,  
to glide,  
Like a beam of the seventh Heaven, down  
to my side,  
There were but a step to be made.

## III.

The fancy flatter'd my mind,  
And again seem'd overbold;  
Now I thought that she cared for me,  
Now I thought she was kind  
Only because she was cold.

## IV.

I heard no sound where I stood  
But the rivulet on from the lawn  
Running down to my own dark wood;  
Or the voice of the long sea-wave as it  
swell'd  
Now and then in the dim-gray dawn;

But I look'd, and round, all round the  
house I beheld  
The death-white curtain drawn;  
Felt a horror over me creep,  
Prickle my skin and catch my breath,  
Knew that the death-white curtain meant  
but sleep,  
Yet I shudder'd and thought like a fool  
of the sleep of death.

## XV.

So dark a mind within me dwells,  
And I make myself such evil cheer,  
That if I be dear to some one else,  
Then some one else may have much to  
fear;  
But if I be dear to some one else,  
Then I should be to myself more dear.  
Shall I not take care of all that I think,  
Yea ev'n of wretched meat and drink,  
If I be dear,  
If I be dear to some one else.

## XVI.

## I.

This lump of earth has left his estate  
The lighter by the loss of his weight;  
And so that he find what he went to  
seek,  
And fulsome Pleasure clog him, and  
drown  
His heart in the gross mud-honey of town,  
He may stay for a year who has gone for  
a week:  
But this is the day when I must speak  
And I see my Oread coming down,  
O this is the day!  
O beautiful creature, what am I  
That I dare to look her way;  
Think I may hold dominion sweet,  
Lord of the pulse that is lord of her breast,  
And dream of her beauty with tender  
dread,  
From the delicate Arab arch of her feet  
To the grace that, bright and light as the  
crest  
Of a peacock, sits on her shining head,  
And she knows it not: O, if she knew it,  
To know her beauty might half undo it.  
I know it the one bright thing to save  
My yet young life in the wilds of Time,



Perhaps from madness, perhaps from  
crime,  
Perhaps from a selfish grave.

## II.

What, if she be fasten'd to this fool  
lord,  
Dare I bid her abide by her word?  
Should I love her so well if she  
Had given her word to a thing so low?  
Shall I love her as well if she  
Can break her word were it even for  
me?  
I trust that it is not so.

## III.

Catch not my breath, O clamorous  
heart,  
Let not my tongue be a thrall to my  
eye,  
For I must tell her before we part,  
I must tell her, or die.

## XVII.

Go not, happy day,  
From the shining fields,  
Go not, happy day,  
Till the maiden yields.  
Rosy is the West,  
Rosy is the South,  
Roses are her cheeks,  
And a rose her mouth  
When the happy Yes  
Falters from her lips,  
Pass and blush the news  
Over glowing ships;  
Over blowing seas,  
Over seas at rest,  
Pass the happy news,  
Blush it thro' the West;  
Till the red man dance  
By his red cedar-tree,  
And the red man's babe  
Leap, beyond the sea.  
Blush from West to East,  
Blush from East to West,  
Till the West is East,  
Blush it thro' the West.  
Rosy is the West,  
Rosy is the South,  
Roses are her cheeks,  
And a rose her mouth.

## XVIII.

## I.

I have led her home, my love, my only  
friend.  
There is none like her, none.  
And never yet so warmly ran my blood  
And sweetly, on and on,  
Calming itself to the long-wish'd-for  
end,  
Full to the banks, close on the promised  
good.

## II.

None like her, none.  
Just now the dry-tongued laurels' pattering  
talk  
Seem'd her light foot along the garden  
walk,  
And shook my heart to think she comes  
once more;  
But even then I heard her close the  
door,  
The gates of Heaven are closed, and she  
is gone.

## III.

There is none like her, none,  
Nor will be when our summers have de-  
ceased.  
O, art thou sighing for Lebanon  
In the long breeze that streams to thy  
delicious East,  
Sighing for Lebanon,  
Dark cedar, tho' thy limbs have here  
increased,  
Upon a pastoral slope as fair,  
And looking to the South, and fed  
With honey'd rain and delicate air,  
And haunted by the starry head  
Of her whose gentle will has changed  
my fate,  
And made my life a perfumed altar-  
flame;  
And over whom thy darkness must have  
spread  
With such delight as theirs of old, thy  
great  
Forefathers of the thornless garden,  
there  
Shadowing the snow-limb'd Eve from  
whom she came.

## IV.

Here will I lie, while these long branches  
 sway,  
 And you fair stars that crown a happy  
 day  
 Go in and out as if at merry play,  
 Who am no more so all forlorn,  
 As when it seem'd far better to be born  
 To labour and the mattock-harden'd  
 hand,  
 Than nursed at ease and brought to un-  
 derstand  
 A sad astrology, the boundless plan  
 That makes you tyrants in your iron  
 skies,  
 Innumerable, pitiless, passionless eyes,  
 Cold fires, yet with power to burn and  
 brand  
 His nothingness into man.

## V.

But now shine on, and what care I,  
 Who in this stormy gulf have found a  
 pearl  
 The countercharm of space and hollow  
 sky,  
 And do accept my madness, and would  
 die  
 To save from some slight shame one  
 simple girl.

## VI.

Would die; for sullen-seeming Death  
 may give  
 More life to Love than is or ever was  
 In our low world, where yet 'tis sweet to  
 live.  
 Let no one ask me how it came to pass;  
 It seems that I am happy, that to me  
 A livelier emerald twinkles in the grass,  
 A purer sapphire melts into the sea.

## VII.

Not die; but live a life of truest breath,  
 And teach true life to fight with mortal  
 wrongs.  
 O, why should Love, like men in drink-  
 ing-songs,  
 Spice his fair banquet with the dust of  
 death?  
 Make answer, Maud my bliss,

Maud made my Maud by that long lov-  
 ing kiss,  
 Life of my life, wilt thou not answer this?  
 'The dusky strand of Death inwoven  
 here  
 With dear Love's tie, makes Love him-  
 self more dear.'

## VIII.

Is that enchanted moan only the swell  
 Of the long waves that roll in yonder bay?  
 And hark the clock within, the silver  
 knell  
 Of twelve sweet hours that past in bridal  
 white,  
 And died to live, long as my pulses play;  
 But now by this my love has closed her  
 sight  
 And given false death her hand, and  
 stol'n away  
 To dreamful wastes where footless fan-  
 cies dwell  
 Among the fragments of the golden day.  
 May nothing there her maiden grace  
 afright!  
 Dear heart, I feel with thee the drowsy  
 spell.  
 My bride to be, my evermore delight,  
 My own heart's heart, my ownest own,  
 farewell;  
 It is but for a little space I go:  
 And ye meanwhile far over moor and fell  
 Beat to the noiseless music of the night!  
 Has our whole earth gone nearer to the  
 glow  
 Of your soft splendours that you look so  
 bright?  
 I have climb'd nearer out of lonely Hell.  
 Beat, happy stars, timing with things  
 below,  
 Beat with my heart more blest than  
 heart can tell,  
 Blest, but for some dark undercurrent  
 woe  
 That seems to draw—but it shall not  
 be so:  
 Let all be well, be well.

## XIX.

## I.

Her brother is coming back to-night,  
 Breaking up my dream of delight.

## II.

My dream? do I dream of bliss?  
 I have walk'd awake with Truth.  
 O when did a morning shine  
 So rich in atonement as this  
 For my dark-dawning youth,  
 Darken'd watching a mother decline  
 And that dead man at her heart and  
 mine:  
 For who was left to watch her but I?  
 Yet so did I let my freshness die.

## III.

I trust that I did not talk  
 To gentle Maud in our walk  
 (For often in lonely wanderings  
 I have cursed him even to lifeless things)  
 But I trust that I did not talk,  
 Not touch on her father's sin:  
 I am sure I did but speak  
 Of my mother's faded cheek  
 When it slowly grew so thin,  
 That I felt she was slowly dying  
 Vext with lawyers and harass'd with debt:  
 For how often I caught her with eyes  
 all wet,  
 Shaking her head at her son and sighing  
 A world of trouble within!

## IV.

And Maud too, Maud was moved  
 To speak of the mother she loved  
 As one scarce less forlorn,  
 Dying abroad and it seems apart  
 From him who had ceased to share her  
 heart,  
 And ever mourning over the feud,  
 The household Fury sprinkled with blood  
 By which our houses are torn:  
 How strange was what she said,  
 When only Maud and the brother  
 Hung over her dying bed —  
 That Maud's dark father and mine  
 Had bound us one to the other,  
 Betrothed us over their wine,  
 On the day when Maud was born;  
 Seal'd her mine from her first sweet  
 breath.  
 Mine, mine by a right, from birth till  
 death.  
 Mine, mine — our fathers have sworn.

## V.

But the true blood spilt had in it a heat  
 To dissolve the precious seal on a bond  
 That, if left uncancell'd, had been so  
 sweet:  
 And none of us thought of a something  
 beyond,  
 A desire that awoke in the heart of the  
 child,  
 As it were a duty done to the tomb,  
 To be friends for her sake, to be recon-  
 ciled;  
 And I was cursing them and my doom,  
 And letting a dangerous thought run  
 wild  
 While often abroad in the fragrant gloom  
 Of foreign churches — I see her there,  
 Bright English lily, breathing a prayer  
 To be friends, to be reconciled!

## VI.

But then what a flint is he!  
 Abroad, at Florence, at Rome,  
 I find whenever she touch'd on me  
 This brother had laugh'd her down,  
 And at last, when each came home,  
 He had darken'd into a frown,  
 Chid her, and forbid her to speak  
 To me, her friend of the years before;  
 And this was what had reddened her  
 cheek  
 When I bow'd to her on the moor.

## VII.

Yet Maud, altho' not blind  
 To the faults of his heart and mind,  
 I see she cannot but love him,  
 And says he is rough but kind,  
 And wishes me to approve him,  
 And tells me, when she lay  
 Sick once, with a fear of worse,  
 That he left his wine and horses and play,  
 Sat with her, read to her, night and day,  
 And tended her like a nurse.

## VIII.

Kind? but the deathbed desire  
 Spurn'd by this heir of the liar —  
 Rough but kind? yet I know  
 He has plotted against me in this,  
 That he plots against me still.  
 Kind to Maud? that were not amiss.

Well, rough but kind; why let it be so:  
For shall not Maud have her will!

## IX.

For, Maud, so tender and true,  
As long as my life endures  
I feel I shall owe you a debt,  
That I never can hope to pay;  
And if ever I should forget  
That I owe this debt to you  
And for your sweet sake to yours;  
O then, what then shall I say? —  
If ever I *should* forget,  
May God make me more wretched  
Than ever I have been yet!

## X.

So now I have sworn to bury  
All this dead body of hate,  
I feel so free and so clear  
By the loss of that dead weight,  
That I should grow light-headed, I fear,  
Fantastically merry;  
But that her brother comes, like a blight  
On my fresh hope, to the Hall to-night.

## XX.

## I.

Strange, that I felt so gay,  
Strange, that I tried to-day  
To beguile her melancholy;  
The Sultan, as we name him, —  
She did not wish to blame him —  
But he vexed her and perplexed her  
With his worldly talk and folly:  
Was it gentle to reprove her  
For stealing out of view  
From a little lazy lover  
Who but claims her as his due?  
Or for chilling his caresses  
By the coolness of her manners,  
Nay, the plainness of her dresses?  
Now I know her but in two,  
Nor can pronounce upon it  
If one should ask me whether  
The habit, hat, and feather,  
Or the frock and gipsy bonnet  
Be the neater and completer;  
For nothing can be sweeter  
Than maiden Maud in either.

## II.

But to-morrow if we live,  
Our ponderous squire will give  
A grand political dinner  
To half the squirelings near;  
And Maud will wear her jewels,  
And the bird of prey will hover,  
And the titmouse hope to win her  
With his chirrup at her ear.

## III.

A grand political dinner  
To the men of many acres,  
A gathering of the Tory,  
A dinner and then a dance  
For the maids and marriage-makers,  
And every eye but mine will glance  
At Maud in all her glory.

## IV.

For I am not invited,  
But, with the Sultan's pardon,  
I am all as well delighted,  
For I know her own rose-garden,  
And mean to linger in it  
Till the dancing will be over;  
And then, oh then, come out to me  
For a minute, but for a minute,  
Come out to your own true lover,  
That your true lover may see  
Your glory also, and render  
All homage to his own darling,  
Queen Maud in all her splendour.

## XXI.

Rivulet crossing my ground,  
And bringing me down from the Hall  
This garden-rose that I found,  
Forgetful of Maud and me,  
And lost in trouble and moving round  
Here at the head of a tinkling fall,  
And trying to pass to the sea;  
O Rivulet, born at the Hall,  
My Maud has sent it by thee  
(If I read her sweet will right)  
On a blushing mission to me,  
Saying in odour and colour, 'Ah, be  
Among the roses to-night.'

## XXII.

## I.

Come into the garden, Maud,  
 For the black bat, night, has flown,  
 Come into the garden, Maud,  
 I am here at the gate alone;  
 And the woodbine spices are wafted  
 abroad,  
 And the musk of the rose is blown.

## II.

For a breeze of morning moves,  
 And the planet of Love is on high,  
 Beginning to faint in the light that she  
 loves  
 On a bed of daffodil sky,  
 To faint in the light of the sun she loves,  
 To faint in his light, and to die.

## III.

All night have the roses heard  
 The flute, violin, bassoon;  
 All night has the casement jessamine  
 stirr'd  
 To the dancers dancing in tune;  
 Till a silence fell with the waking bird,  
 And a hush with the setting moon.

## IV.

I said to the lily, 'There is but one  
 With whom she has heart to be gay.  
 When will the dancers leave her alone?  
 She is weary of dance and play.'  
 Now half to the setting moon are gone,  
 And half to the rising day;  
 Low on the sand and loud on the stone  
 The last wheel echoes away.

## V.

I said to the rose, 'The brief night goes  
 In babble and revel and wine.  
 O young lord-lover, what sighs are those,  
 For one that will never be thine?  
 But mine, but mine,' so I swear to the rose,  
 'For ever and ever, mine.'

## VI.

And the soul of the rose went into my  
 blood,  
 As the music clash'd in the hall;

And long by the garden lake I stood,  
 For I heard your rivulet fall  
 From the lake to the meadow and on to  
 the wood,  
 Our wood, that is dearer than all;

## VII.

From the meadow your walks have left  
 so sweet  
 That whenever a March-wind sighs  
 He sets the jewel-print of your feet  
 In violets blue as your eyes,  
 To the woody hollows in which we meet  
 And the valleys of Paradise.

## VIII.

The slender acacia would not shake  
 One long milk-bloom on the tree;  
 The white-lake-blossom fell into the lake  
 As the pimpernel dozed on the lea;  
 But the rose was awake all night for your  
 sake,  
 Knowing your promise to me;  
 The lilies and roses were all awake,  
 They sigh'd for the dawn and thee.

## IX.

Queen rose of the rosebud garden of girls,  
 Come hither, the dances are done,  
 In gloss of satin and glimmer of pearls,  
 Queen lily and rose in one;  
 Shine out, little head, sunning over with  
 curls,  
 To the flowers, and be their sun.

## X.

There has fallen a splendid tear  
 From the passion-flower at the gate.  
 She is coming, my dove, my dear;  
 She is coming, my life, my fate;  
 The red rose cries, 'She is near, she is  
 near;'  
 And the white rose weeps, 'She is  
 late;'  
 The larkspur listens, 'I hear, I hear;'  
 And the lily whispers, 'I wait.'

## XI.

She is coming, my own, my sweet;  
 Were it ever so airy a tread,  
 My heart would hear her and beat,  
 Were it earth in an earthy bed;

My dust would hear her and beat,  
Had I lain for a century dead;  
Would start and tremble under her feet,  
And blossom in purple and red.

## PART II.

## I.

## I.

'THE fault was mine, the fault was mine'—  
Why am I sitting here so stunn'd and still,  
Plucking the harmless wild-flower on the hill?—  
It is this guilty hand!—  
And there rises ever a passionate cry  
From underneath in the darkening land—  
What is it that has been done?  
O dawn of Eden bright over earth and sky,  
The fires of Hell brake out of thy rising sun,  
The fires of Hell and of Hate;  
For she, sweet soul, had hardly spoken a word,  
When her brother ran in his rage to the gate,  
He came with the babe-faced lord;  
Heap'd on her terms of disgrace,  
And while she wept, and I strove to be cool,  
He fiercely gave me the lie,  
Till I with as fierce an anger spoke,  
And he struck me, madman, over the face,  
Struck me before the languid fool,  
Who was gaping and grinning by:  
Struck for himself an evil stroke;  
Wrought for his house an irredeemable woe;  
For front to front in an hour we stood,  
And a million horrible bellowing echoes broke  
From the red-ribb'd hollow behind the wood,  
And thunder'd up into Heaven the Christless code,  
That must have life for a blow.  
Ever and ever afresh they seem'd to grow.  
Was it he lay there with a fading eye?  
'The fault was mine,' he whisper'd, 'fly!'

Then glided out of the joyous wood  
The ghastly Wraith of one that I know;  
And there rang on a sudden a passionate cry,  
A cry for a brother's blood:  
It will ring in my heart and my ears, till  
I die, till I die.

## II.

Is it gone? my pulses beat—  
What was it? a lying trick of the brain?  
Yet I thought I saw her stand,  
A shadow there at my feet,  
High over the shadowy land.  
It is gone; and the heavens fall in a gentle rain,  
When they should burst and drown with deluging storms  
The feeble vassals of wine and anger and lust,  
The little hearts that know not how to forgive:  
Arise, my God, and strike, for we hold Thee just,  
Strike dead the whole weak race of venomous worms,  
That sting each other here in the dust;  
We are not worthy to live.

## II.

## I.

See what a lovely shell,  
Small and pure as a pearl,  
Lying close to my foot,  
Frail, but a work divine,  
Made so fairly well  
With delicate spire and whorl,  
How exquisitely minute,  
A miracle of design!

## II.

What is it? a learned man  
Could give it a clumsy name.  
Let him name it who can,  
The beauty would be the same.

## III.

The tiny cell is forlorn,  
Void of the little living will  
That made it stir on the shore.  
Did he stand at the diamond door

Of his house in a rainbow frill?  
Did he push, when he was uncurl'd,  
A golden foot or a fairy horn  
Thro' his dim water-world?

## IV.

Slight, to be crush'd with a tap  
Of my finger-nail on the sand,  
Small, but a work divine,  
Frail, but of force to withstand,  
Year upon year, the shock  
Of cataract seas that snap  
The three decker's oaken spine  
Athwart the ledges of rock,  
Here on the Breton strand!

## V.

Breton, not Briton; here  
Like a shipwreck'd man on a coast  
Of ancient fable and fear —  
Plagued with a flitting to and fro,  
A disease, a hard mechanic ghost  
That never came from on high  
Nor ever arose from below,  
But only moves with the moving eye,  
Flying along the land and the main —  
Why should it look like Maud?  
Am I to be overawed  
By what I cannot but know  
Is a juggle born of the brain?

## VI.

Back from the Breton coast,  
Sick of a nameless fear,  
Back to the dark sea-line  
Looking, thinking of all I have lost;  
An old song vexes my ear;  
But that of Lamech is mine.

## VII.

For years, a measureless ill,  
For years, for ever, to part —  
But she, she would love me still;  
And as long, O God, as she  
Have a grain of love for me,  
So long, no doubt, no doubt,  
Shall I nurse in my dark heart,  
However weary, a spark of will  
Not to be trampled out.

## VIII.

Strange, that the mind, when fraught  
With a passion so intense

One would think that it well  
Might drown all life in the eye, —  
That it should, by being so overwrought,  
Suddenly strike on a sharper sense  
For a shell, or a flower, little things  
Which else would have been past by!  
And now I remember, I,  
When he lay dying there,  
I noticed one of his many rings  
(For he had many, poor worm) and  
thought  
It is his mother's hair.

## IX.

Who knows if he be dead?  
Whether I need have fled?  
Am I guilty of blood?  
However this may be,  
Comfort her, comfort her, all things  
good,  
While I am over the sea!  
Let me and my passionate love go by,  
But speak to her all things holy and  
high,  
Whatever happen to me!  
Me and my harmful love go by;  
But come to her waking, find her asleep,  
Powers of the height, Powers of the  
deep,  
And comfort her tho' I die.

## III.

Courage, poor heart of stone!  
I will not ask thee why  
Thou canst not understand  
That thou art left for ever alone:  
Courage, poor stupid heart of stone. —  
Or if I ask thee why,  
Care not thou to reply:  
She is but dead, and the time is at hand  
When thou shalt more than die.

## IV.

## I.

O that 'twere possible  
After long grief and pain  
To find the arms of my true love  
Round me once again!

## II.

When I was wont to meet her  
In the silent woody places



By the home that gave me birth,  
We stood tranced in long embraces  
Mix with kisses sweeter sweeter  
Than anything on earth.

## III.

A shadow flits before me,  
Not thou, but like to thee :  
Ah Christ, that it were possible  
For one short hour to see  
The souls we loved, that they might tell us,  
What and where they be.

## IV.

It leads me forth at evening,  
It lightly winds and steals  
In a cold white robe before me,  
When all my spirit reels  
At the shouts, the leagues of lights,  
And the roaring of the wheels.

## V.

Half the night I waste in sighs,  
Half in dreams I sorrow after  
The delight of early skies;  
In a wakeful doze I sorrow  
For the hand, the lips, the eyes,  
For the meeting of the morrow,  
The delight of happy laughter,  
The delight of low replies.

## VI.

'Tis a morning pure and sweet,  
And a dew splendour falls  
On the little flower that clings  
To the turrets and the walls;  
'Tis a morning pure and sweet,  
And the light and shadow fleet;  
She is walking in the meadow,  
And the woodland echo rings;  
In a moment we shall meet;  
She is singing in the meadow  
And the rivulet at her feet  
Ripples on in light and shadow  
To the ballad that she sings.

## VII.

Do I hear her sing as of old,  
My bird with the shining head,  
My own dove with the tender eye?  
But there rings on a sudden a passionate  
cry,

There is some one dying or dead,  
And a sullen thunder is roll'd;  
For a tumult shakes the city,  
And I wake, my dream is fled;  
In the shuddering dawn, behold,  
Without knowledge, without pity,  
By the curtains of my bed  
That abiding phantom cold.

## VIII.

Get thee hence, nor come again,  
Mix not memory with doubt,  
Pass, thou deathlike type of pain,  
Pass and cease to move about!  
'Tis the blot upon the brain  
That *will* show itself without.

## IX.

Then I rise, the eavedrops fall,  
And the yellow vapours choke  
The great city sounding wide;  
The day comes, a dull red ball  
Wrapt in drifts of lurid smoke  
On the misty river-tide.

## X.

Thro' the hubbub of the market  
I steal, a wasted frame,  
It crosses here, it crosses there,  
Thro' all that crowd confused and loud,  
The shadow still the same;  
And on my heavy eyelids  
My anguish hangs like shame.

## XI.

Alas for her that met me,  
That heard me softly call,  
Came glimmering thro' the laurels  
At the quiet evenfall,  
In the garden by the turrets  
Of the old manorial hall.

## XII.

Would the happy spirit descend,  
From the realms of light and song,  
In the chamber or the street,  
As she looks among the blest,  
Should I fear to greet my friend  
Or to say, 'Forgive me the wrong,'  
Or to ask her, 'Take me, sweet,  
To the regions of thy rest'?

## XIII.

But the broad light glares and beats,  
 And the shadow flits and fleets  
 And will not let me be;  
 And I loathe the squares and streets,  
 And the faces that one meets,  
 Hearts with no love for me:  
 Always I long to creep  
 Into some still cavern deep,  
 There to weep, and weep, and weep  
 My whole soul out to thee.

## V.

## I.

Dead, long dead,  
 Long dead!  
 And my heart is a handful of dust,  
 And the wheels go over my head,  
 And my bones are shaken with pain,  
 For into a shallow grave they are thrust,  
 Only a yard beneath the street,  
 And the hoofs of the horses beat, beat,  
 The hoofs of the horses beat,  
 Beat into my scalp and my brain,  
 With never an end to the stream of  
 passing feet,  
 Driving, hurrying, marrying, burying,  
 Clamour and rumble, and ringing and  
 clatter,  
 And here beneath it is all as bad,  
 For I thought the dead had peace, but it  
 is not so;  
 To have no peace in the grave, is that  
 not sad?  
 But up and down and to and fro,  
 Ever about me the dead men go;  
 And then to hear a dead man chatter  
 Is enough to drive one mad.

## II.

Wretchedest age since Time began,  
 They cannot even bury a man;  
 And tho' we paid our tithes in the days  
 that are gone,  
 Not a bell was rung, not a prayer was  
 read;  
 It is that which makes us loud in the  
 world of the dead;  
 There is none that does his work, not  
 one;

A touch of their office might have  
 sufficed,  
 But the churchmen fain would kill their  
 church,  
 As the churches have kill'd their Christ.

## III.

See, there is one of us sobbing,  
 No limit to his distress;  
 And another, a lord of all things, praying  
 To his own great self, as I guess;  
 And another, a statesman there, betraying  
 His party-secret, fool, to the press;  
 And yonder a vile physician, blabbing  
 The case of his patient — all for what?  
 To tickle the maggot born in an empty  
 head,  
 And wheedle a world that loves him not,  
 For it is but a world of the dead.

## IV.

Nothing but idiot gabble!  
 For the prophecy given of old  
 And then not understood,  
 Has come to pass as foretold;  
 Not let any man think for the public  
 good,  
 But babble, merely for babble.  
 For I never whisper'd a private affair  
 Within the hearing of cat or mouse,  
 No, not to myself in the closet alone,  
 But I heard it shouted at once from the  
 top of the house;  
 Everything came to be known.  
 Who told *him* we were there?

## V.

Not that gray old wolf, for he came not  
 back  
 From the wilderness, full of wolves, where  
 he used to lie;  
 He has gather'd the bones for his o'er-  
 grown whelp to crack;  
 Crack them now for yourself, and howl,  
 and die.

## VI.

Prophet, curse me the blabbing lip,  
 And curse me the British vermin, the rat;  
 I know not whether he came in the  
 Hanover ship,  
 But I know that he lies and listens mute

In an ancient mansion's crannies and  
holes:

Arsenic, arsenic, sure, would do it,  
Except that now we poison our babes,  
poor souls!  
It is all used up for that.

## VII.

Tell him now: she is standing here at my  
head;  
Not beautiful now, not even kind;  
He may take her now; for she never  
speaks her mind,  
But is ever the one thing silent here.  
She is not *of* us, as I divine;  
She comes from another stiller world of  
the dead,  
Stiller, not fairer than mine.

## VIII.

But I know where a garden grows,  
Fairer than aught in the world beside,  
All made-up of the lily and rose  
That blow by night, when the season is  
good,  
To the sound of dancing music and flutes:  
It is only flowers, they had no fruits,  
And I almost fear they are not roses, but  
blood;  
For the keeper was one, so full of pride,  
He linkt a dead man there to a spectral  
bride;  
For he, if he had not been a Sultan of  
brutes,  
Would he have that hole in his side?

## IX.

But what will the old man say?  
He laid a cruel snare in a pit  
To catch a friend of mine one stormy  
day;  
Yet now I could even weep to think  
of it;  
For what will the old man say?  
When he comes to the second corpse in  
the pit?

## X.

Friend, to be struck by the public foe,  
Then to strike him and lay him low,  
That were a public merit, far,  
Whatever the Quaker holds, from sin;  
But the red life spilt for a private  
blow—  
I swear to you, lawful and lawless war  
Are scarcely even akin.

## XI.

O me, why have they not buried me deep  
enough?  
Is it kind to have made me a grave so  
rough,  
Me, that was never a quiet sleeper?  
Maybe still I am but half-dead;  
Then I cannot be wholly dumb;  
I will cry to the steps above my head  
And somebody, surely, some kind heart  
will come  
To bury me, bury me  
Deeper, ever so little deeper.

## PART III.

## VI.

## I.

My life has crept so long on a broken wing  
Thro' cells of madness, haunts of horror and fear,  
That I come to be grateful at last for a little thing:  
My mood is changed, for it fell at a time of year  
When the face of night is fair on the dewy downs,  
And the shining daffodil dies, and the Charioteer  
And starry Gemini hang like glorious crowns  
Over Orion's grave low down in the west,  
That like a silent lightning under the stars  
She seem'd to divide in a dream from a band of the blest,

And spoke of a hope for the world in the coming wars —  
 'And in that hope, dear soul, let trouble have rest,  
 Knowing I tarry for thee,' and pointed to Mars  
 As he glow'd like a ruddy shield on the Lion's breast.

## II.

And it was but a dream, yet it yielded a dear delight  
 To have look'd, tho' but in a dream, upon eyes so fair,  
 That had been in a weary world my one thing bright;  
 And it was but a dream, yet it lighten'd my despair  
 When I thought that a war would arise in defence of the right,  
 That an iron tyranny now should bend or cease,  
 The glory of manhood stand on his ancient height,  
 Nor Britain's one sole God be the millionaire:  
 No more shall commerce be all in all, and Peace  
 Pipe on her pastoral hillock a languid note,  
 And watch her harvest ripen, her herd increase,  
 Nor the cannon-bullet rust on a slothful shore,  
 And the cobweb woven across the cannon's throat  
 Shall shake its threaded tears in the wind no more.

## III.

And as months ran on and rumour of battle grew,  
 'It is time, it is time, O passionate heart,' said I  
 (For I cleaved to a cause that I felt to be pure and true),  
 'It is time, O passionate heart and morbid eye,  
 That old hysterical mock-disease should die.'  
 And I stood on a giant deck and mix'd my breath  
 With a loyal people shouting a battle cry,  
 Till I saw the dreary phantom arise and fly  
 Far into the North, and battle, and seas of death.

## IV.

Let it go or stay, so I wake to the higher aims  
 Of a land that has lost for a little her lust of gold,  
 And love of a peace that was full of wrongs and shames,  
 Horrible, hateful, monstrous, not to be told;  
 And hail once more to the banner of battle unroll'd!  
 Tho' many a light shall darken, and many shall weep  
 For those that are crush'd in the clash of jarring claims,  
 Yet God's just wrath shall be wreak'd on a giant liar;  
 And many a darkness into the light shall leap,  
 And shine in the sudden making of splendid names,  
 And noble thought be freer under the sun,  
 And the heart of a people beat with one desire;  
 For the peace, that I deem'd no peace, is over and done,  
 And now by the side of the Black and the Baltic deep,  
 And deathful-grinning mouths of the fortress, flames  
 The blood-red blossom of war with a heart of fire.

## v.

Let it flame or fade, and the war roll down like a wind,  
 We have proved we have hearts in a cause, we are noble still,  
 And myself have awaked, as it seems, to the better mind;  
 It is better to fight for the good than to rail at the ill;  
 I have felt with my native land, I am one with my kind,  
 I embrace the purpose of God, and the doom assign'd.

## IDYLLS OF THE KING.

IN TWELVE BOOKS.

'*Flos Regum Arthurus.*'—JOSEPH OF EXETER.

## DEDICATION.

THESE to His Memory—since he held  
 them dear,  
 Perchance as finding there unconsciously  
 Some image of himself—I dedicate,  
 I dedicate, I consecrate with tears—  
 These Idylls.

And indeed He seems to me  
 Scarce other than my king's ideal knight,  
 'Who revered his conscience as his  
 king;  
 Whose glory was, redressing human  
 wrong;  
 Who spake no slander, no, nor listen'd  
 to it;  
 Who loved one only and who clave to  
 her—'  
 Her—over all whose realms to their last  
 isle,  
 Commingled with the gloom of imminent  
 war,  
 The shadow of His loss drew like eclipse,  
 Darkening the world. We have lost  
 him: he is gone:  
 We know him now: all narrow jealousies  
 Are silent; and we see him as he moved,  
 How modest, kindly, all-accomplish'd,  
 wise,  
 With what sublime repression of himself,  
 And in what limits, and how tenderly;  
 Not swaying to this faction or to that;  
 Not making his high place the lawless  
 perch  
 Of wing'd ambitions, nor a vantage-  
 ground

For pleasure; but thro' all this tract of  
 years  
 Wearing the white flower of a blameless  
 life,  
 Before a thousand peering littlenesses,  
 In that fierce light which beats upon a  
 throne,  
 And blackens every blot: for where is he,  
 Who dares foreshadow for an only son  
 A lovelier life, a more unstain'd than  
 his?  
 Or how should England dreaming of *his*  
 sons  
 Hope more for these than some inheri-  
 tance  
 Of such a life, a heart, a mind as thine,  
 Thou noble Father of her Kings to be,  
 Laborious for her people and her poor—  
 Voice in the rich dawn of an ampler  
 day—  
 Far-sighted summoner of War and Waste  
 To fruitful strifes and rivalries of peace—  
 Sweet nature gilded by the gracious  
 gleam  
 Of letters, dear to Science, dear to Art,  
 Dear to thy land and ours, a Prince  
 indeed,  
 Beyond all titles, and a household name,  
 Hereafter, thro' all times, Albert the  
 Good.

Break not, O woman's-heart, but still  
 endure;  
 Break not, for thou art Royal, but endure,  
 Remembering all the beauty of that star

Which shone so close beside Thee that  
ye made  
One light together, but has past and leaves  
The Crown a lonely splendour.

May all love,  
His love, unseen but felt, o'ershadow Thee,

The love of all Thy sons encompass  
Thee,  
The love of all Thy daughters cherish  
Thee,  
The love of all Thy people comfort  
Thee,  
Till God's love set Thee at his side again!

## THE COMING OF ARTHUR.

LEODOGRAN, the King of Cameliard,  
Had one fair daughter, and none other  
child;  
And she was fairest of all flesh on earth,  
Guinevere, and in her his one delight.

For many a petty king ere Arthur  
came  
Ruled in this isle, and ever waging war  
Each upon other, wasted all the land;  
And still from time to time the heathen  
host  
Swarm'd overseas, and harried what was  
left.  
And so there grew great tracts of wilder-  
ness,  
Wherein the beast was ever more and  
more,  
But man was less and less, till Arthur  
came.  
For first Aurelius lived and fought and  
died,  
And after him King Uther fought and  
died,  
But either fail'd to make the kingdom  
one.  
And after these King Arthur for a space,  
And thro' the puissance of his Table  
Round,  
Drew all their petty princedoms under  
him,  
Their king and head, and made a realm,  
and reign'd.

And thus the land of Cameliard was  
waste,  
Thick with wet woods, and many a beast  
therein,  
And none or few to scare or chase the  
beast;  
So that wild dog, and wolf and boar and  
bear

Came night and day, and rooted in the  
fields,  
And wallow'd in the gardens of the King.  
And ever and anon the wolf would steal  
The children and devour, but now and  
then,  
Her own brood lost or dead, lent her  
fierce teat  
To human sucklings; and the children,  
housed  
In her foul den, there at their meat  
would growl,  
And mock their foster-mother on four  
feet,  
Till, straighten'd, they grew up to wolf-  
like men,  
Worse than the wolves. And King  
Leodogran  
Groan'd for the Roman legions here  
again,  
And Caesar's eagle: then his brother king,  
Urien, assail'd him: last a heathen  
horde,  
Reddening the sun with smoke and  
earth with blood,  
And on the spike that split the mother's  
heart  
Spitting the child, brake on him, till,  
amazed,  
He knew not whither he should turn for  
aid.

But—for he heard of Arthur newly  
crown'd,  
Tho' not without an uproar made by  
those  
Who cried, 'He is not Uther's son'—  
the King  
Sent to him, saying, 'Arise, and help us  
thou!  
For here between the man and beast we  
die.'

And Arthur yet had done no deed of arms,  
 But heard the call, and came: and Guinevere  
 Stood by the castle walls to watch him pass;  
 But since he neither wore on helm or shield  
 The golden symbol of his kinglihood,  
 But rode a simple knight among his knights,  
 And many of these in richer arms than he,  
 She saw him not, or mark'd not, if she saw,  
 One among many, tho' his face was bare.  
 But Arthur, looking downward as he past,  
 Felt the light of her eyes into his life  
 Smite on the sudden, yet rode on, and pitch'd  
 His tents beside the forest. Then he drove  
 The heathen; after, slew the beast, and fell'd  
 The forest, letting in the sun, and made  
 Broad pathways for the hunter and the knight  
 And so return'd.

For while he linger'd there,  
 A doubt that ever smoulder'd in the hearts  
 Of those great Lords and Barons of his realm  
 Flash'd forth and into war: for most of these,  
 Colleaguig with a score of petty kings,  
 Made head against him, crying, 'Who is he  
 That he should rule us? who hath proven him  
 King Uther's son? for lo! we look at him,  
 And find nor face nor bearing, limbs nor voice,  
 Are like to those of Uther whom we knew.  
 This is the son of Gorlois, not the King;  
 This is the son of Anton, not the King.'

And Arthur, passing thence to battle, felt  
 Travail, and throes and agonies of the life,

Desiring to be join'd with Guinevere;  
 And thinking as he rode, 'Her father said  
 That there between the man and beast they die.  
 Shall I not lift her from this land of beasts  
 Up to my throne, and side by side with me?  
 What happiness to reign a lonely king,  
 Vext — O ye stars that shudder over me,  
 O earth that soundest hollow under me,  
 Vext with waste dreams? for saving I be join'd  
 To her that is the fairest under heaven,  
 I seem as nothing in the mighty world,  
 And cannot will my will, nor work my work  
 Wholly, nor make myself in mine own realm  
 Victor and lord. But were I join'd with her,  
 Then might we live together as one life,  
 And reigning with one will in everything  
 Have power on this dark land to lighten it,  
 And power on this dead world to make it live.'

Thereafter — as he speaks who tells the tale —  
 When Arthur reach'd a field-of-battle bright  
 With pitch'd pavilions of his foe, the world  
 Was all so clear about him, that he saw  
 The smallest rock far on the faintest hill,  
 And even in high day the morning star.  
 So when the King had set his banner broad,  
 At once from either side, with trumpet-blast,  
 And shouts, and clarions shrilling unto blood,  
 The long-lanced battle let their horses run.  
 And now the Barons and the kings prevail'd,  
 And now the King, as here and there that war  
 Went swaying; but the Powers who walk the world  
 Made lightnings and great thunders over him,



And dazed all eyes, till Arthur by main  
 might,  
 And mightier of his hands with every  
 blow,  
 And leading all his knighthood threw the  
 kings  
 Carádos, Urien, Cradlemon of Wales,  
 Claudius, and Clariance of Northumber-  
 land,  
 The King Brandagoras of Latangor,  
 With Anguisant of Erin, Morganore,  
 And Lot of Orkney. Then, before a  
 voice  
 As dreadful as the shout of one who  
 sees  
 To one who sins, and deems himself  
 alone  
 And all the world asleep, they swerved  
 and brake  
 Flying, and Arthur call'd to stay the  
 brands  
 That hack'd among the flyers, 'Ho! they  
 yield!'  
 So like a painted battle the war stood  
 Silenced, the living quiet as the dead,  
 And in the heart of Arthur joy was lord.  
 He laugh'd upon his warrior whom he  
 loved  
 And honour'd most. 'Thou dost not  
 doubt me King,  
 So well thine arm hath wrought for me  
 to-day.'  
 'Sir and my liege,' he cried, 'the fire of  
 God  
 Descends upon thee in the battle-field:  
 I know thee for my King!' Whereat the  
 two,  
 For each had warded either in the fight,  
 Sware on the field of death a deathless  
 love.  
 And Arthur said, 'Man's word is God in  
 man:  
 Let chance what will, I trust thee to the  
 death.'

Then quickly from the foughten field  
 he sent  
 Ulfius, and Brastias, and Bedivere,  
 His new-made knights, to King Leodo-  
 gran,  
 Saying, 'If I in aught have served thee  
 well,  
 Give me thy daughter Guinevere to wife.'

x

Whom when he heard, Leodogran in  
 heart  
 Debating—'How should I that am a  
 king,  
 However much he help me at my need,  
 Give my one daughter saving to a king,  
 And a king's son?'—lifted his voice, and  
 called  
 A hoary man, his chamberlain, to whom  
 He trusted all things, and of him re-  
 quired  
 His counsel: 'Knowest thou aught of  
 Arthur's birth?'

Then spake the hoary chamberlain and  
 said,  
 'Sir King, there be but two old men that  
 know:  
 And each is twice as old as I; and one  
 Is Merlin, the wise man that ever served  
 King Uther thro' his magic art; and one  
 Is Merlin's master (so they call him)  
 Bleys,  
 Who taught him magic; but the scholar  
 ran  
 Before the master, and so far, that Bleys  
 Laid magic by, and sat him down, and  
 wrote  
 All things and whatsoever Merlin did  
 In one great annal-book, where after-years  
 Will learn the secret of our Arthur's birth.'

To whom the King Leodogran replied,  
 'O friend, had I been holpen half as  
 well  
 By this King Arthur as by thee to-day,  
 Then beast and man had had their share  
 of me:  
 But summon here before us yet once more  
 Ulfius, and Brastias, and Bedivere.'

Then, when they came before him, the  
 King said,  
 'I have seen the cuckoo chased by lesser  
 fowl,  
 And reason in the chase: but wherefore  
 now  
 Do these your lords stir up the heat of  
 war,  
 Some calling Arthur born of Gorlois,  
 Others of Anton? Tell me, ye yourselves,  
 Hold ye this Arthur for King Uther's  
 son?'

And Ulfus and Brastias answer'd, 'Ay.'  
Then Bedivere, the first of all his knights  
Knighthed by Arthur at his crowning,  
spake —

For bold in heart and act and word was  
he,  
Whenever slander breathed against the  
King —

'Sir, there be many rumours on this  
head:

For there be those who hate him in their  
hearts,  
Call him baseborn, and since his ways are  
sweet,  
And theirs are bestial, hold him less than  
man:

And there be those who deem him more  
than man,  
And dream he dropt from heaven: but  
my belief

In all this matter — so ye care to learn —  
Sir, for ye know that in King Uther's time  
The prince and warrior Gorlois, he that  
held

Tintagil castle by the Cornish sea,  
Was wedded with a winsome wife, Ygerne:  
And daughters had she borne him, — one  
whereof,

Lot's wife, the Queen of Orkney, Belli-  
cent,

Hath ever like a loyal sister cleaved  
To Arthur, — but a son she had not borne.  
And Uther cast upon her eyes of love:  
But she, a stainless wife to Gorlois,  
So loathed the bright dishonour of his  
love,

That Gorlois and King Uther went to war:  
And overthrown was Gorlois and slain.  
Then Uther in his wrath and heat be-  
sieged

Ygerne within Tintagil, where her men,  
Seeing the mighty swarm about their  
walls,

Left her and fled, and Uther enter'd in,  
And there was none to call to but him-  
self.

So, compass'd by the power of the King,  
Enforced she was to wed him in her tears,  
And with a shameful swiftness: after-  
ward,

Not many moons, King Uther died him-  
self,

Moaning and wailing for an heir to rule  
After him, lest the realm should go to  
wrack.

And that same night, the night of the  
new year,

By reason of the bitterness and grief  
That vext his mother, all before his time  
Was Arthur born, and all as soon as born  
Deliver'd at a secret postern-gate  
To Merlin, to be holden far apart  
Until his hour should come; because the  
lords

Of that fierce day were as the lords of this,  
Wild beasts, and surely would have torn  
the child

Piecemeal among them, had they known;  
for each

But sought to rule for his own self and  
hand,

And many hated Uther for the sake  
Of Gorlois. Wherefore Merlin took the  
child,

And gave him to Sir Anton, an old knight  
And ancient friend of Uther; and his wife  
Nursed the young prince, and rear'd him  
with her own;

And no man knew. And ever since the  
lords

Have foughten like wild beasts among  
themselves,

So that the realm has gone to wrack: but  
now,

This year, when Merlin (for his hour had  
come)

Brought Arthur forth, and set him in the  
hall,

Proclaiming, "Here is Uther's heir, your  
king,"

A hundred voices cried, "Away with him!  
No king of ours! a son of Gorlois he,  
Or else the child of Anton, and no king,  
Or else baseborn." Yet Merlin thro' his  
craft,

And while the people clamour'd for a  
king,

Had Arthur crown'd; but after, the great  
lords

Banded, and so brake out in open war.'

Then while the King debated with him-  
self

If Arthur were the child of shamefulnes,  
Or born the son of Gorlois, after death,

Or Uther's son, and born before his time,  
 Or whether there were truth in anything  
 Said by these three, there came to Came-  
 liard,  
 With Gawain and young Modred, her two  
 sons,  
 Lot's wife, the Queen of Orkney, Belli-  
 cent;  
 Whom as he could, not as he would, the  
 King  
 Made feast for, saying, as they sat at meat,

'A doubtful throne is ice on summer  
 seas.

Ye come from Arthur's court. Victor his  
 men  
 Report him! Yea, but ye — think ye this  
 king —  
 So many those that hate him, and so  
 strong,  
 So few his knights, however brave they  
 be —  
 Hath body enow to hold his foemen  
 down?'

'O King,' she cried, 'and I will tell  
 thee: few,  
 Few, but all brave, all of one mind with  
 him;  
 For I was near him when the savage yells  
 Of Uther's peerage died, and Arthur sat  
 Crown'd on the dais, and his warriors  
 cried,  
 "Be thou the king, and we will work thy  
 will  
 Who love thee." Then the King in low  
 deep tones,  
 And simple words of great authority,  
 Bound them by so strait vows to his own  
 self,  
 That when they rose, knighted from  
 kneeling, some  
 Were pale as at the passing of a ghost,  
 Some flush'd, and others dazed, as one  
 who wakes  
 Half-blinded at the coming of a light.

'But when he spake and cheer'd his  
 Table Round  
 With large, divine, and comfortable words,  
 Beyond my tongue to tell thee — I beheld  
 From eye to eye thro' all their Order flash  
 A momentary likeness of the King:

And ere it left their faces, thro' the cross  
 And those around it and the Crucified,  
 Down from the casement over Arthur,  
 smote  
 Flame-colour, vert and azure, in three  
 rays,  
 One falling upon each of three fair queens,  
 Who stood in silence near his throne, the  
 friends  
 Of Arthur, gazing on him, tall, with bright  
 Sweet faces, who will help him at his  
 need.

'And there I saw mage Merlin, whose  
 vast wit  
 And hundred winters are but as the hands  
 Of loyal vassals toiling for their liege.

'And near him stood the Lady of the  
 Lake,  
 Who knows a subtler magic than his  
 own —  
 Clothed in white samite, mystic, wonder-  
 ful.  
 She gave the King his huge cross-hilted  
 sword,  
 Whereby to drive the heathen out: a mist  
 Of incense curl'd about her, and her face  
 Wellnigh was hidden in the minster  
 gloom;  
 But there was heard among the holy  
 hymns  
 A voice as of the waters, for she dwells  
 Down in a deep; calm, whatsoever storms  
 May shake the world, and when the  
 surface rolls,  
 Hath power to walk the waters like our  
 Lord.

'There likewise I beheld Excalibur  
 Before him at his crowning borne, the  
 sword  
 That rose from out the bosom of the lake,  
 And Arthur row'd across and took it —  
 rich  
 With jewels, elfin Urim, on the hilt,  
 Bewildering heart and eye — the blade so  
 bright  
 That men are blinded by it — on one side,  
 Graven in the oldest tongue of all this  
 world,  
 "Take me," but turn the blade and ye  
 shall see,

And written in the speech ye speak your-  
self,  
"Cast me away!" And sad was Arthur's  
face  
Taking it, but old Merlin counsell'd him,  
"Take thou and strike! the time to cast  
away  
Is yet far-off." So this great brand the  
king  
Took, and by this will beat his foemen  
down.'

Thereat Leodogran rejoiced, but  
thought  
To sift his doubtings to the last, and ask'd,  
Fixing full eyes of question on her face,  
'The swallow and the swift are near akin,  
But thou art closer to this noble prince,  
Being his own dear sister;' and she said,  
'Daughter of Gorlois and Ygerne am I;  
'And therefore Arthur's sister?' ask'd  
the King.  
She answer'd, 'These be secret things,'  
and sign'd  
To those two sons to pass, and let them be.  
And Gawain went, and breaking into song  
Sprang out, and follow'd by his flying hair  
Ran like a colt, and leapt at all he saw:  
But Modred laid his ear beside the doors,  
And there half-heard; the same that  
afterward  
Struck for the throne, and striking found  
his doom.

And then the Queen made answer,  
'What know I?  
For dark my mother was in eyes and hair,  
And dark in hair and eyes am I; and dark  
Was Gorlois, yea and dark was Uther too,  
Wellnigh to blackness; but this King is  
fair  
Beyond the race of Britons and of men.  
Moreover, always in my mind I hear  
A cry from out the dawning of my life,  
A mother weeping, and I hear her say,  
"O that ye had some brother, pretty one,  
To guard thee on the rough ways of the  
world."'

'Ay,' said the King, 'and hear ye such  
a cry?  
But when did Arthur chance upon thee  
first?'

'O King!' she cried, 'and I will tell  
thee true:  
He found me first when yet a little maid:  
Beaten had I been for a little fault  
Whereof I was not guilty; and out I ran  
And flung myself down on a bank of  
heath,  
And hated this fair world and all therein,  
And wept, and wish'd that I were dead;  
and he —  
I know not whether of himself he came,  
Or brought by Merlin, who, they say,  
can walk  
Unseen at pleasure — he was at my side,  
And spake sweet words, and comforted  
my heart,  
And dried my tears, being a child with me.  
And many a time he came, and evermore  
As I grew greater grew with me; and sad  
At times he seem'd, and sad with him  
was I,  
Stern too at times, and then I loved him  
not,  
But sweet again, and then I loved him  
well.  
And now of late I see him less and less,  
But those first days had golden hours for  
me,  
For then I surely thought he would be  
king.

'But let me tell thee now another tale:  
For Bleys, our Merlin's master, as they say,  
Died but of late, and sent his cry to me,  
To hear him speak before he left his life.  
Shrunk like a fairy changeling lay the  
mage;  
And when I enter'd told me that himself  
And Merlin ever served about the King,  
Uther, before he died; and on the night  
When Uther in Tintagil past away  
Moaning and wailing for an heir, the two  
Left the still King, and passing forth to  
breathe,  
Then from the castle gateway by the  
chasm  
Descending thro' the dismal night—a  
night  
In which the bounds of heaven and earth  
were lost—  
Beheld, so high upon the dreary deeps  
It seem'd in heaven, a ship, the shape  
thereof

A dragon wing'd, and all from stem to stern  
 Bright with a shining people on the decks,  
 And gone as soon as seen. And then  
 the two  
 Dropt to the cove, and watch'd the great  
 sea fall,  
 Wave after wave, each mightier than the  
 last,  
 Till last, a ninth one, gathering half the  
 deep  
 And full of voices, slowly rose and plunged  
 Roaring, and all the wave was in a flame:  
 And down the wave and in the flame was  
 borne  
 A naked babe, and rode to Merlin's feet,  
 Who stooped and caught the babe, and  
 cried "The King!  
 Here is an heir for Uther!" And the  
 fringe  
 Of that great breaker, sweeping up the  
 strand,  
 Lash'd at the wizard as he spake the word,  
 And all at once all round him rose in fire,  
 So that the child and he were clothed in  
 fire.  
 And presently thereafter follow'd calm,  
 Free sky and stars: "And this same  
 child," he said,  
 "Is he who reigns; nor could I part in  
 peace  
 Till this were told." And saying this the  
 seer  
 Went thro' the strait and dreadful pass of  
 death,  
 Nor ever to be question'd any more  
 Save on the further side; but when I met  
 Merlin, and ask'd him if these things were  
 truth —  
 The shining dragon and the naked child  
 Descending in the glory of the seas —  
 He laugh'd as is his wont, and answer'd  
 me  
 In riddling triplets of old time, and said:

"Rain, rain, and sun! a rainbow in  
 the sky!  
 A young man will be wiser by and by;  
 An old man's wit may wander ere he die.  
 Rain, rain, and sun! a rainbow on the  
 lea!  
 And truth is this to me, and that to thee;  
 And truth or clothed or naked let it be.

Rain, sun, and rain! and the free  
 blossom blows:  
 Sun, rain, and sun! and where is he who  
 knows?  
 From the great deep to the great deep he  
 goes."

'So Merlin riddling anger'd me; but  
 thou  
 Fear not to give this King thine only child,  
 Guinevere: so great bards of him will  
 sing  
 Hereafter; and dark sayings from of old  
 Ranging and ringing thro' the minds of  
 men,  
 And echo'd by old folk beside their fires  
 For comfort after their wage-work is done,  
 Speak of the King; and Merlin in our  
 time  
 Hath spoken also, not in jest, and sworn  
 Tho' men may wound him that he will  
 not die,  
 But pass, again to come; and then or now  
 Utterly smite the heathen underfoot,  
 Till these and all men hail him for their  
 king.'

She spake and King Leodogran re-  
 joiced,  
 But musing 'Shall I answer yea or nay?'  
 Doubted, and drowsed, nodded and slept,  
 and saw,  
 Dreaming, a slope of land that ever grew,  
 Field after field, up to a height, the peak  
 Haze-hidden, and thereon a phantom  
 king,  
 Now looming, and now lost; and on the  
 slope  
 The sword rose, the hind fell, the herd  
 was driven,  
 Fire glimpsed; and all the land from  
 roof and rick,  
 In drifts of smoke before a rolling wind,  
 Stream'd to the peak, and mingled with  
 the haze  
 And made it thicker; while the phantom  
 king  
 Sent out at times a voice; and here or  
 there  
 Stood one who pointed toward the voice,  
 the rest  
 Slew on and burnt, crying, 'No king of  
 ours,

No son of Uther, and no king of ours; 'Till with a wink his dream was changed, the haze Descended, and the solid earth became As nothing, but the King stood out in heaven, Crown'd. And Leodogran awoke, and sent Ulfius, and Brastias and Bedivere, Back to the court of Arthur answering yea.

Then Arthur charged his warrior whom he loved  
And honour'd most, Sir Lancelot, to ride forth  
And bring the Queen; — and watch'd him from the gates:  
And Lancelot past away among the flowers,  
(For then was latter April) and return'd  
Among the flowers, in May, with Guinevere.  
To whom arrived, by Dubric the high saint,  
Chief of the church in Britain, and before  
The stateliest of her altar-shrines, the King  
That morn was married, while in stainless white,  
The fair beginners of a nobler time,  
And glorying in their vows and him, his knights  
Stood round him, and rejoicing in his joy.  
Far shone the fields of May thro' open door,  
The sacred altar blossom'd white with May,  
The Sun of May descended on their King,  
They gazed on all earth's beauty in their Queen,  
Roll'd incense, and there past along the hymns  
A voice as of the waters, while the two  
Swore at the shrine of Christ a deathless love:  
And Arthur said, 'Behold, thy doom is mine.  
Let chance what will, I love thee to the death!'  
To whom the Queen replied with drooping eyes,  
'King and my lord, I love thee to the death!'

And holy Dubric spread his hands and spake,  
'Reign ye, and live and love, and make the world  
Other, and may thy Queen be one with thee,  
And all this Order of thy Table Round  
Fulfil the boundless purpose of their King!'

So Dubric said; but when they left the shrine  
Great Lords from Rome before the portal stood,  
In scornful stillness gazing as they past;  
Then while they paced a city all on fire  
With sun and cloth of gold, the trumpets blew,  
And Arthur's knighthood sang before the King: —

'Blow trumpet, for the world is white with May;  
Blow trumpet, the long night hath roll'd away!  
Blow thro' the living world — "Let the King reign."

'Shall Rome or Heathen rule in Arthur's realm?  
Flash brand and lance, fall battleaxe upon helm,  
Fall battleaxe, and flash brand! Let the King reign.

'Strike for the King and live! his knights have heard  
That God hath told the King a secret word.  
Fall battleaxe and flash brand! Let the King reign.

'Blow trumpet! he will lift us from the dust.  
Blow trumpet! live the strength and die the lust!  
Clang battleaxe, and clash brand! Let the King reign.

'Strike for the King and die! and if thou diest,  
The King is King, and ever wills the highest.



Clang battleaxe, and clash brand! Let  
the King reign.

'Blow, for our Sun is mighty in his May!  
Blow, for our Sun is mightier day by day!  
Clang battleaxe, and clash brand! Let  
the King reign.

'The King will follow Christ, and we  
the King  
In whom high God hath breathed a secret  
thing.  
Fall battleaxe, and flash brand! Let the  
King reign.'

So sang the knighthood, moving to their  
hall.  
There at the banquet those great Lords  
from Rome,  
The slow-fading mistress of the world,  
Strode in, and claim'd their tribute as of  
yore.  
But Arthur spake, 'Behold, for these  
have sworn

To wage my wars, and worship me their  
King;  
The old order changeth, yielding place  
to new;  
And we that fight for our fair father  
Christ,  
Seeing that ye be grown too weak and  
old  
To drive the heathen from your Roman  
wall,  
No tribute will we pay: ' so those great  
lords  
Drew back in wrath, and Arthur strove  
with Rome.

And Arthur and his knighthood for a  
space  
Were all one will, and thro' that strength  
the King  
Drew in the petty principedoms under him,  
Fought, and in twelve great battles over-  
came  
The heathen hordes, and made a realm  
and reign'd.

## THE ROUND TABLE.

GARETH AND LYNETTE.  
THE MARRIAGE OF GERAINTE.  
GERAINTE AND ENID.  
BALIN AND BALAN.  
MERLIN AND VIVIEN.

LANCELOT AND ELAINE.  
THE HOLY GRAIL.  
PELLEAS AND ETARRRE.  
THE LAST TOURNAMENT.  
GUINEVERE.

## GARETH AND LYNETTE.

THE last tall son of Lot and Bellicent,  
And tallest, Gareth, in a showerful spring  
Stared at the spate. A slender-shafted  
Pine  
Lost footing, fell, and so was whirl'd  
away.  
'How he went down,' said Gareth, 'as a  
false knight  
Or evil king before my lance if lance  
Were mine to use—O senseless cataract,  
Bearing all down in thy precipitancy—  
And yet thou art but swollen with cold  
snows  
And mine is living blood: thou dost His  
will,  
The Maker's, and not knowest, and I  
that know,  
Have strength and wit, in my good  
mother's hall

Linger with vacillating obedience,  
Prison'd, and kept and coax'd and  
whistled to—  
Since the good mother holds me still a  
child!  
Good mother is bad mother unto me!  
A worse were better; yet no worse  
would I.  
Heaven yield her for it, but in me put  
force  
To weary her ears with one continuous  
prayer,  
Until she let me fly discharg'd to sweep  
In ever-highering eagle-circles up  
To the great Sun of Glory, and thence  
swoop  
Down upon all things base, and dash  
them dead,  
A knight of Arthur, working out his will,  
To cleanse the world. Why, Gawain,  
when he came



With Modred hither in the summer-  
time,  
Ask'd me to tilt with him, the proven  
knight.  
Modred for want of worthier was the  
judge.  
Then I so shook him in the saddle, he  
said,  
"Thou hast half prevail'd against me,"  
said so — he —  
Tho' Modred biting his thin lips was  
mute,  
For he is alway sullen: what care I?'

And Gareth went, and hovering round  
her chair  
Ask'd, 'Mother, tho' ye count me still  
the child,  
Sweet mother, do ye love the child?'  
She laugh'd,  
'Thou art but a wild-goose to question  
it.'  
'Then, mother, and ye love the child,'  
he said,  
'Being a goose and rather tame than  
wild,  
Hear the child's story.' 'Yea, my well-  
beloved,  
An 'twere but of the goose and golden  
eggs.'

And Gareth answer'd her with kind-  
ling eyes,  
'Nay, nay, good mother, but this egg of  
mine  
Was finer gold than any goose can lay;  
For this an Eagle, a royal Eagle, laid  
Almost beyond eye-reach, on such a  
palm  
As glitters gilded in thy Book of Hours.  
And there was ever haunting round the  
palm  
A lusty youth, but poor, who often saw  
The splendour sparkling from aloft, and  
thought  
'An I could climb and lay my hand upon  
it,  
Then were I wealthier than a leash of  
kings."  
But ever when he reach'd a hand to  
climb,  
One that had loved him from his child-  
hood, caught

And stay'd him, "Climb not lest thou  
break thy neck,  
I charge thee by my love," and so the  
boy,  
Sweet mother, neither clomb, nor brake  
his neck,  
And brake his very heart in pining for it,  
And past away.'

To whom the mother said,  
'True love, sweet son, had risk'd himself  
and climb'd,  
And handed down the golden treasure to  
him.'

And Gareth answer'd her with kindling  
eyes,  
'Gold? said I gold? — ay then, why he,  
or she,  
Or whosoe'er it was, or half the world  
Had ventured — had the thing I spake of  
been  
Mere gold — but this was all of that true  
steel,  
Whereof they forged the brand Excalibur,  
And lightnings play'd about it in the  
storm,  
And all the little fowl were flurried at it,  
And there were cries and clashings in the  
nest,  
That sent him from his senses: let me go.'

Then Bellicent bemoan'd herself and  
said,  
'Hast thou no pity upon my loneliness?  
Lo, where thy father Lot beside the  
hearth  
Lies like a log, and all but smoulder'd  
out!  
For ever since when traitor to the King  
He fought against him in the Barons' war,  
And Arthur gave him back his territory,  
His age hath slowly droopt, and now lies  
there  
A yet-warm corpse, and yet unburi-  
able,  
No more; nor sees, nor hears, nor  
speaks, nor knows.  
And both thy brethren are in Arthur's  
hall,  
Albeit neither loved with that full love  
I feel for thee, nor worthy such a love:  
Stay therefore thou; red berries charm  
the bird,

And thee, mine innocent, the jousts, the wars,  
 Who never knewest finger-ache, nor pang  
 Of wrench'd or broken limb — an often  
 chance  
 In those brain-stunning shocks, and  
 tourney-falls,  
 Frights to my heart; but stay: follow  
 the deer  
 By these tall firs and our fast-falling  
 burns;  
 So make thy manhood mightier day by  
 day;  
 Sweet is the chase: and I will seek thee  
 out  
 Some comfortable bride and fair, to grace  
 Thy climbing life, and cherish my prone  
 year,  
 Till falling into Lot's forgetfulness  
 I know not thee, myself, nor anything.  
 Stay, my best son! ye are yet more boy  
 than man.'

Then Gareth, 'An ye hold me yet for  
 child,  
 Hear yet once more the story of the  
 child.  
 For, mother, there was once a King, like  
 ours.  
 The prince his heir, when tall and mar-  
 riageable,  
 Ask'd for a bride; and thereupon the  
 King  
 Set two before him. One was fair,  
 strong; arm'd —  
 But to be won by force — and many men  
 Desired her; one, good lack, no man  
 desired.  
 And these were the conditions of the  
 King:  
 That save he won the first by force, he  
 needs  
 Must wed that other, whom no man  
 desired,  
 A red-faced bride who knew herself so  
 vile,  
 That evermore she long'd to hide her-  
 self,  
 Nor fronted man or woman, eye to eye —  
 Yea — some she cleaved to, but they  
 died of her.  
 And one — they call'd her Fame; and  
 one, — O mother,

How can ye keep me tether'd to you —  
 Shame.  
 Man am I grown, a man's work must I  
 do.  
 Follow the deer? follow the Christ, the  
 King,  
 Live pure, speak true, right wrong, fol-  
 low the King —  
 Else, wherefore born?'

To whom the mother said,  
 'Sweet son, for there be many who deem  
 him not,  
 Or will not deem him, wholly proven  
 King —  
 Albeit in mine own heart I knew him  
 King,  
 When I was frequent with him in my  
 youth,  
 And heard him Kingly speak, and  
 doubted him  
 No more than he, himself; but felt him  
 mine,  
 Of closest kin to me: yet — wilt thou  
 leave  
 Thine easeful bidding here, and risk thine  
 all,  
 Life, limbs, for one that is not proven  
 King?  
 Stay, till the cloud that settles round  
 his birth  
 Hath lifted but a little. Stay, sweet son.'

And Gareth answer'd quickly, 'Not  
 an hour,  
 So that ye yield me — I will walk thro'  
 fire,  
 Mother, to gain it — your full leave to go.  
 Not proven, who swept the dust of  
 ruin'd Rome  
 From off the threshold of the realm,  
 and crush'd  
 The Idolaters, and made the people free?  
 Who should be King save him who  
 makes us free?'

So when the Queen, who long had  
 sought in vain  
 To break him from the intent to which  
 he grew,  
 Found her son's will unwaveringly one,  
 She answer'd craftily, 'Will ye walk  
 thro' fire?'

Who walks thro' fire will hardly heed  
the smoke.

Ay, go then, an ye must: only one proof,  
Before thou ask the King to make thee  
knight,  
Of thine obedience and thy love to me,  
Thy mother, — I demand.'

And Gareth cried,  
'A hard one, or a hundred, so I go.  
Nay — quick! the proof to prove me  
to the quick!'

But slowly spake the mother looking  
at him,  
'Prince, thou shalt go disguised to  
Arthur's hall,  
And hire thyself to serve for meats and  
drinks  
Among the scullions and the kitchen-  
knaves,  
And those that hand the dish across the  
bar.  
Nor shalt thou tell thy name to any one.  
And thou shalt serve a twelvemonth and  
a day.'

For so the Queen believed that when  
her son  
Beheld his only way to glory lead  
Low down thro' villain kitchen-vassalage,  
Her own true Gareth was too princely-  
proud  
To pass thereby; so should he rest with  
her,  
Closed in her castle from the sound of  
arms.

Silent awhile was Gareth, then replied,  
'The thrall in person may be free in soul,  
And I shall see the jousts. Thy son am I,  
And since thou art my mother, must obey.  
I therefore yield me freely to thy will;  
For hence will I, disguised, and hire  
myself  
To serve with scullions and with kitchen-  
knaves;  
Nor tell my name to any — no, not the  
King.'

Gareth awhile linger'd. The mother's  
eye  
Full of the wistful fear that he would go,

And turning toward him wheresoe'er he  
turn'd,  
Perplex his outward purpose, till an hour,  
When waken'd by the wind which with  
full voice  
Swept bellowing thro' the darkness on  
to dawn,  
He rose, and out of slumber calling two  
That still had tended on him from his  
birth,  
Before the wakeful mother heard him,  
went.

The three were clad like tillers of the  
soil.  
Southward they set their faces. The  
birds made  
Melody on branch, and melody in mid-  
air.  
The damp hill-slopes were quicken'd  
into green,  
And the live green had kindled into  
flowers,  
For it was past the time of Easterday.

So, when their feet were planted on  
the plain  
That broaden'd toward the base of Came-  
lot,  
Far off they saw the silver-misty morn  
Rolling her smoke about the Royal  
mount,  
That rose between the forest and the  
field.  
At times the summit of the high city  
flash'd;  
At times the spires and turrets half-way  
down  
Prick'd thro' the mist; at times the  
great gate shone  
Only, that open'd on the field below:  
Anon, the whole fair city had disappear'd.

Then those who went with Gareth  
were amazed,  
One crying, 'Let us go no further, lord.  
Here is a city of Enchanters, built  
By fairy Kings.' The second echo'd  
him,  
'Lord, we have heard from our wise  
man at home  
To Northward, that this King is not the  
King,

But only changeling out of Fairyland,  
 Who drave the heathen hence by sorcery  
 And Merlin's glamour.' Then the first  
 again,  
 'Lord, there is no such city anywhere,  
 But all a vision.'

• Gareth answer'd them  
 With laughter, swearing he had glamour  
 enow  
 In his own blood, his pryncedom, youth  
 and hopes,  
 To plunge old Merlin in the Arabian  
 sea;  
 So push'd them all unwilling toward the  
 gate.  
 And there was no gate like it under  
 heaven.  
 For barefoot on the keystone, which was  
 lined  
 And rippled like an ever-fleeting wave,  
 The Lady of the Lake stood; all her  
 dress  
 Wept from her sides as water flowing  
 away;  
 But like the cross her great and goodly  
 arms  
 Stretch'd under all the cornice and up-  
 held:  
 And drops of water fell from either  
 hand;  
 And down from one a sword was hung,  
 from one  
 A censer, either worn with wind and  
 storm;  
 And o'er her breast floated the sacred  
 fish;  
 And in the space to left of her, and right,  
 Were Arthur's wars in weird devices  
 done,  
 New things and old co-twisted, as if  
 Time  
 Were nothing, so inveterately, that men  
 Were giddy gazing there; and over all  
 High on the top were those three  
 Queens, the friends  
 Of Arthur, who should help him at his  
 need.

Then those with Gareth for so long a  
 space  
 Stared at the figures, that at last it  
 seem'd

The dragon-boughts and elvish emblem-  
 ings  
 Began to move, seethe, twine and curl:  
 they call'd  
 To Gareth, 'Lord, the gateway is alive.'

And Gareth likewise on them fixt his  
 eyes  
 So long, that ev'n to him they seem'd to  
 move.  
 Out of the city a blast of music peal'd.  
 Back from the gate started the three, to  
 whom  
 From out thereunder came an ancient  
 man,  
 Long-bearded, saying, 'Who be ye, my  
 sons?'

Then Gareth, 'We be tillers of the soil,  
 Who leaving share in furrow come to see  
 The glories of our King: but these, my  
 men,  
 (Your city moved so weirdly in the mist)  
 Doubt if the King be King at all, or  
 come  
 From Fairyland; and whether this be  
 built  
 By magic, and by fairy Kings and  
 Queens;  
 Or whether there be any city at all,  
 Or all a vision: and this music now  
 Hath scared them both, but tell thou  
 these the truth.'

Then that old Seer made answer play-  
 ing on him  
 And saying, 'Son, I have seen the good  
 ship sail  
 Keel upward, and mast downward, in  
 the heavens,  
 And solid turrets topsy-turvy in air:  
 And here is truth; but an it please thee  
 not,  
 Take thou the truth as thou hast told it  
 me.  
 For truly as thou sayest, a Fairy King  
 And Fairy Queens have built the city,  
 son;  
 They came from out a sacred mountain-  
 cleft  
 Toward the sunrise, each with harp in  
 hand,  
 And built it to the music of their harps.

And, as thou sayest, it is enchanted,  
 son,  
 For there is nothing in it as it seems  
 Saving the King; tho' some there be  
 that hold  
 The King a shadow, and the city real:  
 Yet take thou heed of him, for, so thou  
 pass  
 Beneath this archway, then wilt thou  
 become  
 A thrall to his enchantments, for the  
 King  
 Will bind thee by such vows, as is a  
 shame  
 A man should not be bound by, yet the  
 which  
 No man can keep; but, so thou dread  
 to swear,  
 Pass not beneath this gateway, but  
 abide  
 Without, among the cattle of the field.  
 For an ye heard a music, like enow  
 They are building still, seeing the city is  
 built  
 To music, therefore never built at all,  
 And therefore built for ever.'

Gareth spake  
 Anger'd, 'Old Master, reverence thine  
 own beard  
 That looks as white as utter truth, and  
 seems  
 Wellnigh as long as thou art statured  
 tall!  
 Why mockest thou the stranger that hath  
 been  
 To thee fair-spoken?'

But the Seer replied,  
 'Know ye not then the Riddling of the  
 Bards?  
 "Confusion, and illusion, and relation,  
 Elusion, and occasion, and evasion"?  
 I mock thee not but as thou mockest  
 me,  
 And all that see thee, for thou art not  
 who  
 Thou seemest, but I know thee who  
 thou art.  
 And now thou goest up to mock the  
 King,  
 Who cannot brook the shadow of any  
 lie.'

Unmockingly the mocker ending here  
 Turn'd to the right, and past along the  
 plain;  
 Whom Gareth looking after said, 'My  
 men,  
 Our one white lie sits like a little ghost  
 Here on the threshold of our enterprise.  
 Let love be blamed for it, not she, nor I:  
 Well, we will make amends.'

With all good cheer  
 He spake and laugh'd, then enter'd with  
 his twain  
 Camelot, a city of shadowy palaces  
 And stately, rich in emblem and the  
 work  
 Of ancient kings who did their days in  
 stone;  
 Which Merlin's hand, the Mage at  
 Arthur's court,  
 Knowing all arts, had touch'd, and every-  
 where  
 At Arthur's ordinance, tipt with lessening  
 peak  
 And pinnacle, and had made it spire to  
 heaven.  
 And ever and anon a knight would pass  
 Outward, or inward to the hall: his arms  
 Clash'd; and the sound was good to  
 Gareth's ear.  
 And out of bower and casement shyly  
 glanced  
 Eyes of pure women, wholesome stars of  
 love;  
 And all about a healthful people slept  
 As in the presence of a gracious king.

Then into hall Gareth ascending heard  
 A voice, the voice of Arthur, and beheld  
 Far over heads in that long-vaulted hall  
 The splendour of the presence of the  
 King  
 Throned, and delivering doom—and  
 look'd no more—  
 But felt his young heart hammering in  
 his ears,  
 And thought, 'For this half-shadow of a  
 lie  
 The truthful King will doom me when I  
 speak.'  
 Yet pressing on, tho' all in fear to find  
 Sir Gawain or Sir Modred, saw nor one  
 Nor other, but in all the listening eyes

Of those tall knights, that ranged about  
 the throne,  
 Clear honour shining like the dewy star  
 Of dawn, and faith in their great King,  
 with pure  
 Affection, and the light of victory,  
 And glory gain'd, and evermore to gain.

Then came a widow crying to the King,  
 'A boon, Sir King! Thy father, Uther,  
 reft  
 From my dead lord a field with violence:  
 For howsoe'er at first he proffer'd gold,  
 Yet, for the field was pleasant in our eyes,  
 We yielded not; and then he reft us of it  
 Perforce, and left us neither gold nor  
 field.'

Said Arthur, 'Whether would ye? gold  
 or field?'  
 To whom the woman weeping, 'Nay, my  
 lord,  
 The field was pleasant in my husband's  
 eye.'

And Arthur, 'Have thy pleasant field  
 again,  
 And thrice the gold for Uther's use  
 thereof,  
 According to the years. No boon is here,  
 But justice, so thy say be proven true.  
 Accursed, who from the wrongs his father  
 did  
 Would shape himself a right!'

And while she past,  
 Came yet another widow crying to him,  
 'A boon, Sir King! Thine enemy, King,  
 am I.  
 With thine own hand thou slewest my  
 dear lord,  
 A knight of Uther in the Barons' war,  
 When Lot and many another rose and  
 fought  
 Against thee, saying thou wert basely  
 born.  
 I held with these, and loathe to ask thee  
 aught.  
 Yet lo! my husband's brother had my  
 son.  
 Thrall'd in his castle, and hath starved  
 him dead;  
 And standeth seized of that inheritance

Which thou that slewest the sire hast left  
 the son.  
 So tho' I scarce can ask it thee for hate,  
 Grant me some knight to do the battle  
 for me,  
 Kill the foul thief, and wreak me for my  
 son.'

Then strode a good knight forward,  
 crying to him,  
 'A boon, Sir King! I am her kinsman, I.  
 Give me to right her wrong, and slay the  
 man.'

Then came Sir Kay, the seneschal, and  
 cried,  
 'A boon, Sir King! ev'n that thou grant  
 her none,  
 This railer, that hath mock'd thee in full  
 hall—  
 None; or the wholesome boon of gyve  
 and gag.'

But Arthur, 'We sit King, to help the  
 wrong'd  
 Thro' all our realm. The woman loves  
 her lord.  
 Peace to thee, woman, with thy loves and  
 hates!  
 The kings of old had doom'd thee to the  
 flames,  
 Aurelius Emrys would have scourged thee  
 dead,  
 And Uther slit thy tongue: but get thee  
 hence—  
 Lest that rough humour of the kings of  
 old  
 Return upon me! Thou that art her  
 kin,  
 Go likewise; lay him low and slay him  
 not,  
 But bring him here, that I may judge the  
 right,  
 According to the justice of the King:  
 Then, be he guilty, by that deathless King  
 Who lived and died for men, the man  
 shall die.'

Then came in hall the messenger of  
 Mark,  
 A name of evil savour in the land,  
 The Cornish king. In either hand he  
 bore



What dazzled all, and shone far-off as  
shines

A field of charlock in the sudden sun  
Between two showers, a cloth of palest  
gold,

Which down he laid before the throne,  
and knelt,

Delivering, that his lord, the vassal king,  
Was ev'n upon his way to Camelot;

For having heard that Arthur of his grace  
Had made his goodly cousin, Tristram,  
knight,

And, for himself was of the greater state,  
Being a king, he trusted his liege-lord  
Would yield him this large honour all the  
more;

So pray'd him well to accept this cloth of  
gold,

In token of true heart and fealty.

Then Arthur cried to rend the cloth, to  
rend

In pieces, and so cast it on the hearth.  
An oak-tree smoulder'd there. 'The  
goodly knight!

What! shall the shield of Mark stand  
among these?'

For, midway down the side of that long  
hall

A stately pile, — whereof along the front,  
Some blazon'd, some but carven, and  
some blank,

There ran a treble range of stony  
shields, —

Rose, and high-arching overbrow'd the  
hearth.

And under every shield a knight was  
named:

For this was Arthur's custom in his hall;  
When some good knight had done one  
noble deed,

His arms were carven only; but if twain  
His arms were blazon'd also; but if none,  
The shield was blank and bare without a  
sign

Saving the name beneath; and Gareth  
saw

The shield of Gawain blazon'd rich and  
bright,

And Modred's blank as death; and  
Arthur cried

To rend the cloth and cast it on the  
hearth.

'More like are we to reave him of his  
crown

Than make him knight because men call  
him king.

The kings we found, ye know we stay'd  
their hands

From war among themselves, but left  
them kings;

Of whom were any bounteous, merciful,  
Truth-speaking, brave, good livers, them  
we enroll'd

Among us, and they sit within our hall.  
But Mark hath tarnish'd the great name  
of king,

As Mark would sully the low state of  
churl:

And, seeing he hath sent us cloth of  
gold,

Return, and meet, and hold him from  
our eyes,

Lest we should lap him up in cloth of  
lead,

Silenced for ever — craven — a man of  
plots,

Crafts, poisonous counsels, wayside am-  
bushings —

No fault of thine: let Kay the seneschal  
Look to thy wants, and send thee satis-  
fied —

Accursed, who strikes nor lets the hand  
be seen!'

And many another suppliant crying  
came

With noise of ravage wrought by beast  
and man,

And evermore a knight would ride away.

Last, Gareth leaning both hands heavily  
Down on the shoulders of the twain, his  
men,

Approach'd between them toward the  
King, and ask'd,

'A boon, Sir King (his voice was all  
ashamed),

For see ye not how weak and hungerworn  
I seem — leaning on these? grant me to  
serve

For meat and drink among thy kitchen-  
knives

A twelvemonth and a day, nor seek my  
name.

Hereafter I will fight.'



To him the King,  
 'A goodly youth and worth a goodlier  
 boon!  
 But so thou wilt no goodlier, then must  
 Kay,  
 The master of the meats and drinks, be  
 thine.'

He rose and past; then Kay, a man  
 of mien  
 Wan-sallow as the plant that feels itself  
 Root-bitten by white lichen,

'Lo ye now!

This fellow hath broken from some Abbey,  
 where,  
 God wot, he had not beef and brewis  
 enow,  
 However that might chance! but an he  
 work,  
 Like any pigeon will I cram his crop,  
 And sleeker shall he shine than any hog.'

Then Lancelot standing near, 'Sir  
 Seneschal,  
 Sleuth-hound thou knowest, and gray,  
 and all the hounds;  
 A horse thou knowest, a man thou dost  
 not know:  
 Broad brows and fair, a fluent hair and  
 fine,  
 High nose, a nostril large and fine, and  
 hands  
 Large, fair and fine! — Some young lad's  
 mystery —  
 But, or from sheepcot or king's hall, the  
 boy  
 Is noble-natured. Treat him with all  
 grace,  
 Lest he should come to shame thy judging  
 of him.'

Then Kay, 'What murmurest thou of  
 mystery?  
 Think ye this fellow will poison the  
 King's dish?  
 Nay, for he spake too fool-like: mys-  
 tery!  
 Tut, an the lad were noble, he had ask'd  
 For horse and armour: fair and fine,  
 forsooth!  
 Sir Fine-face, Sir Fair-hands? but see  
 thou to it

That thine own fineness, Lancelot, some  
 fine day  
 Undo thee not — and leave my man to me.'

So Gareth all for glory underwent  
 The sooty yoke of kitchen-vassalage;  
 Ate with young lads his portion by the  
 door,  
 And couch'd at night with grimy kitchen-  
 knives.

And Lancelot ever spake him pleasantly,  
 But Kay the seneschal, who loved him not,  
 Would hustle and harry him, and labour  
 him

Beyond his comrade of the hearth, and set  
 To turn the broach, draw water, or hew  
 wood,

Or grosser tasks; and Gareth bow'd  
 himself

With all obedience to the King, and  
 wrought

All kind of service with a noble ease  
 That graced the lowliest act in doing it.  
 And when the thralls had talk among  
 themselves,

And one would praise the love that linkt  
 the King

And Lancelot — how the King had saved  
 his life

In battle twice, and Lancelot once the  
 King's —

For Lancelot was the first in Tournament,  
 But Arthur mightiest on the battle-field —  
 Gareth was glad. Or if some other told,  
 How once the wandering forester at dawn,  
 Far over the blue tarns and hazy seas,  
 On Caer-Eryri's highest found the King,  
 A naked babe, of whom the Prophet  
 spake,

'He passes to the Isle Avilion,  
 He passes and is heal'd and cannot die' —  
 Gareth was glad. But if their talk were  
 foul,

Then would he whistle rapid as any lark,  
 Or carol some old roundelay, and so loud  
 That first they mock'd, but, after, rever-  
 enced him.

Or Gareth telling some prodigious tale  
 Of knights, who sliced a red life-bubbling  
 way

Thro' twenty folds of twisted dragon, held  
 All in a gap-mouth'd circle his good mates  
 Lying or sitting round him, idle hands,

Charm'd; till Sir Kay, the seneschal,  
 would come  
 Blustering upon them, like a sudden  
 wind  
 Among dead leaves, and drive them all  
 apart.  
 Or when the thralls had sport among  
 themselves,  
 So there were any trial of mastery,  
 He, by two yards in casting bar or stone  
 Was counted best; and if there chanced  
 a joust,  
 So that Sir Kay nodded him leave to go,  
 Would hurry thither, and when he saw  
 the knights  
 Clash like the coming and retiring wave,  
 And the spear spring, and good horse  
 reel, the boy  
 Was half beyond himself for ecstasy.

So for a month he wrought among the  
 thralls;  
 But in the weeks that follow'd, the good  
 Queen,  
 Repentant of the word she made him  
 swear,  
 And saddening in her childless castle,  
 sent,  
 Between the in-crescent and de-crescent  
 moon,  
 Arms for her son, and loosed him from  
 his vow.

This, Gareth hearing from a squire of  
 Lot  
 With whom he used to play at tourney  
 once,  
 When both were children, and in lonely  
 haunts  
 Would scratch a ragged oval on the sand,  
 And each at either dash from either  
 end—  
 Shame never made girl redder than  
 Gareth joy.  
 He laugh'd; he sprang. 'Out of the  
 smoke, at once  
 I leap from Satan's foot to Peter's knee—  
 These news be mine, none other's— nay,  
 the King's—  
 Descend into the city:' whereon he  
 sought  
 The King alone, and found, and told him  
 all.

'I have stagger'd thy strong Gawain in  
 a tilt  
 For pastime; yea, he said it: joust can I.  
 Make me thy knight—in secret! let my  
 name  
 Be hid'n, and give me the first quest, I  
 spring  
 Like flame from ashes.'

Here the King's calm eye  
 Fell on, and check'd, and made him flush,  
 and bow  
 Lowly, to kiss his hand, who answer'd  
 him,  
 'Son, the good mother let me know thee  
 here,  
 And sent her wish that I would yield thee  
 thine.  
 Make thee my knight? my knights are  
 sworn to vows  
 Of utter hardihood, utter gentleness,  
 And, loving, utter faithfulness in love,  
 And uttermost obedience to the King.'

Then Gareth, lightly springing from  
 his knees,  
 'My King, for hardihood I can promise  
 thee.  
 For uttermost obedience make demand  
 Of whom ye gave me to, the Seneschal,  
 No mellow master of the meats and  
 drinks!  
 And as for love, God wot, I love not yet,  
 But love I shall, God willing.'

And the King—  
 'Make thee my knight in secret? yea,  
 but he,  
 Our noblest brother, and our truest man,  
 And one with me in all, he needs must  
 know.'

'Let Lancelot know, my King, let  
 Lancelot know,  
 Thy noblest and thy truest!'

And the King—  
 'But wherefore would ye men should  
 wonder at you?  
 Nay, rather for the sake of me, thy King,  
 And the deed's sake my knighthood do  
 the deed,  
 Than to be noised of.'

Merrily Gareth ask'd,

'Have I not earn'd my cake in baking  
of it?

Let be my name until I make my name!  
My deeds will speak: it is but for a day.'

So with a kindly hand on Gareth's arm  
Smiled the great King, and half-unwill-  
ingly

Loving his lusty youthhood yielded to  
him.

Then, after summoning Lancelot privily,  
'I have given him the first quest: he is  
not proven.

Look therefore when he calls for this in  
hall,

Thou get to horse and follow him far  
away.

Cover the lions on thy shield, and see  
Far as thou mayest, he be nor ta'en nor  
slain.'

Then that same day there past into  
the hall

A damsel of high lineage, and a brow  
May-blossom, and a cheek of apple-  
blossom,

Hawk-eyes; and lightly was her slender  
nose

Tip-tilted like the petal of a flower;  
She into hall past with her page and  
cried,

'O King, for thou hast driven the foe  
without,

See to the foe within! bridge, ford, beset  
By bandits, everyone that owns a tower  
The Lord for half a league. Why sit ye  
there?

Rest would I not, Sir King, an I were  
king,

Till ev'n the lonest hold were all as free  
From cursed bloodshed, as thine altar-  
cloth

From that best blood it is a sin to spill.'

'Comfort thyself,' said Arthur, 'I nor  
mine

Rest: so my knighthood keep the vows  
they swore,

The wastest moorland of our realm shall  
be

Safe, damsel, as the centre of this hall.  
What is thy name? thy need?'

'My name?' she said —

'Lynette my name; noble; my need, a  
knight

To combat for my sister, Lyonors,  
A lady of high lineage, of great lands,  
And comely, yea, and comelier than my-  
self.

She lives in Castle Perilous: a river  
Runs in three loops about her living  
place;

And o'er it are three passings, and three  
knights

Defend the passings, brethren, and a  
fourth

And of that four the mightiest, holds  
her stayed

In her own castle, and so besieges her  
To break her will, and make her wed  
with him:

And but delays his purport till thou send  
To do the battle with him, thy chief man  
Sir Lancelot whom he trusts to over-  
throw,

Then wed, with glory: but she will not  
wed

Save whom she loveth, or a holy life.  
Now therefore have I come for Lancelot.'

Then Arthur mindful of Sir Gareth  
ask'd,

'Damsel, ye know this Order lives to  
crush

All wrongers of the Realm. But say,  
these four,

Who be they? What the fashion of  
the men?'

'They be of foolish fashion, O Sir King,  
The fashion of that old knight-errantry  
Who ride abroad, and do but what they  
will;

Courteous or bestial from the moment,  
such

As have nor law nor king; and three of  
these

Proud in their fantasy call themselves  
the Day,

Morning-Star, and Noon-Sun, and Even-  
ing-Star,

Being strong fools; and never a whit  
more wise

The fourth, who always rideth arm'd in  
black,

A huge man-beast of boundless savagery.

He names himself the Night and oftener Death,

And wears a helmet mounted with a skull,

And bears a skeleton figured on his arms,

To show that who may slay or scape the three,

Slain by himself, shall enter endless night.

And all these four be fools, but mighty men,

And therefore am I come for Lancelot.'

Hereat Sir Gareth call'd from where he rose,

A head with kindling eyes above the throng,

'A boon, Sir King—this quest!' then — for he mark'd

Kay near him groaning like a wounded bull—

'Yea, King, thou knowest thy kitchen knave am I,

And mighty thro' thy meats and drinks am I,

And I can topple over a hundred such.

Thy promise, 'King,' and Arthur glancing at him,

Brought down a momentary brow.

'Rough, sudden,

And pardonable, worthy to be knight—

Go therefore,' and all hearers were amazed.

But on the damsel's forehead shame, pride, wrath

Slew the May-white: she lifted either arm,

'Fie on thee, King! I ask'd for thy chief knight,

And thou hast given me but a kitchen-knave.'

Then ere a man in hall could stay her, turn'd,

Fled down the lane of access to the King,

Took horse, descended the slope street, and past

The weird white gate, and paused without, beside

The field of tourney, murmuring 'kitchen-knave.'

Now two great entries open'd from the hall,

At one end one, that gave upon a range Of level pavement where the King would

pace

At sunrise, gazing over plain and wood; And down from this a lordly stairway

sloped

Till lost in blowing trees and tops of towers;

And out by this main doorway past the King.

But one was counter to the hearth, and rose

High that the highest-crested helm could ride

Therethro' nor graze: and by this entry fled

The damsel in her wrath, and on to this Sir Gareth strode, and saw without the

door

King Arthur's gift, the worth of half a town,

A warhorse of the best, and near it stood

The two that out of north had follow'd him:

This bare a maiden shield, a casque; that held

The horse, the spear; whereat Sir Gareth loosed

A cloak that dropt from collar-bone to heel,

A cloth of roughest web, and cast it down,

And from it like a fuel-smother'd fire, That lookt half-dead, brake bright, and

flash'd as those

Dull-coated things, that making slide apart

Their dusk wing-cases, all beneath there burns

A jewell'd harness, ere they pass and fly.

So Gareth ere he parted flash'd in arms.

Then as he donn'd the helm, and took the shield

And mounted horse and graspt a spear, of grain

Storm-strengthen'd on a windy site, and tipt

With trenchant steel, around him slowly prest

The people, while from out of kitchen came

The thralls in throng, and seeing who  
 had work'd  
 Lustier than any, and whom they could  
 but love,  
 Mounted in arms, threw up their caps and  
 cried,  
 'God bless the King, and all his fellow-  
 ship!'  
 And on thro' lanes of shouting Gareth  
 rode  
 Down the slope street, and past without  
 the gate.

So Gareth past with joy; but as the cur  
 Pluckt from the cur he fights with, ere his  
 cause  
 Be cool'd by fighting, follows, being  
 named,  
 His owner, but remembers all, and grows  
 Remembering, so Sir Kay beside the door  
 Mutter'd in scorn of Gareth whom he used  
 To harry and hustle.

'Bound upon a quest  
 With horse and arms—the King hath  
 past his time—  
 My scullion knave! Thralls to your work  
 again,  
 For an your fire be low ye kindle mine!  
 Will there be dawn in West and eve in  
 East?  
 Begone!—my knave!—belike and like  
 enow  
 Some old head-blow not heeded in his  
 youth  
 So shook his wits they wander in his  
 prime—  
 Crazed! How the villain lifted up his  
 voice,  
 Nor shamed to bawl himself a kitchen-  
 knave.  
 Tut: he was tame and meek enow with  
 me,  
 Till peacock'd up with Lancelot's noticing.  
 Well—I will after my loud knave, and  
 learn  
 Whether he know me for his master yet.  
 Out of the smoke he came, and so my  
 lance  
 Hold, by God's grace, he shall into the  
 mire—  
 Thence, if the King awaken from his craze,  
 Into the smoke again.'

But Lancelot said,  
 'Kay, wherefore wilt thou go against the  
 King,  
 For that did never he whereon ye rail,  
 But ever meekly served the King in thee?  
 Abide: take counsel; for this lad is great  
 And lusty, and knowing both of lance and  
 sword.'  
 'Tut, tell not me,' said Kay, 'ye' are  
 overfine  
 To mar stout knaves with foolish courtes-  
 ies:'  
 Then mounted, on thro' silent faces rode  
 Down the slope city, and out beyond the  
 gate.

But by the field of tourney lingering yet  
 Mutter'd the damsel, 'Wherefore did the  
 King  
 Scorn me? for, were Sir Lancelot lackt,  
 at least  
 He might have yielded to me one of those  
 Who tilt for lady's love and glory here,  
 Rather than—O sweet heaven! O fie  
 upon him—  
 His kitchen-knave.'

To whom Sir Gareth drew  
 (And there were none but few goodlier  
 than he)  
 Shining in arms, 'Damsel, the quest is  
 mine.  
 Lead, and I follow.' She thereat, as one  
 That smells a foul-flesh'd agaric in the  
 holt,  
 And deems it carrion of some woodland  
 thing,  
 Or shrew, or weasel, nipt her slender  
 nose  
 With petulant thumb and finger, shrilling,  
 'Hence!  
 Avoid, thou smellst all of kitchen-grease.  
 And look who comes behind,' for there  
 was Kay.  
 'Knowest thou not me? thy master? I  
 am Kay.  
 We lack thee by the hearth.'

And Gareth to him,  
 'Master no more! too well I know thee,  
 ay—  
 The most ungentle knight in Arthur's  
 hall.'

'I have at thee then,' said Kay: they  
shock'd, and Kay  
Fell shoulder-slipt, and Gareth cried  
again,  
'Lead, and I follow,' and fast away she  
fled.

But after sod and shingle ceased to fly  
Behind her, and the heart of her good horse  
Was nigh to burst with violence of the beat,  
Perforce she stay'd, and overtaken spoke.

'What doest thou, scullion, in my  
fellowship?  
Deem'st thou that I accept thee aught the  
more  
Or love thee better, that by some device  
Full cowardly, or by mere unhappiness,  
Thou hast overthrown and slain thy  
master — thou! —  
Dish-washer and broach-turner, loon! —  
to me  
Thou smellst all of kitchen as before.'

'Damsel,' Sir Gareth answer'd gently,  
'say  
Whate'er ye will, but whatsoe'er ye say,  
I leave not till I finish this fair quest,  
Or die therefore.'

'Ay, wilt thou finish it?  
Sweet lord, how like a noble knight he  
talks!  
The listening rogue hath caught the man-  
ner of it.  
But, knave, anon thou shalt be met with,  
knave,  
And then by such a one that thou for all  
The kitchen brewis that was ever supt  
Shalt not once dare to look him in the  
face.'

'I shall assay,' said Gareth with a smile  
That madden'd her, and away she flash'd  
again  
Down the long avenues of a boundless  
wood,  
And Gareth following was again beknaved.

'Sir Kitchen-knave, I have miss'd the  
only way  
Where Arthur's men are set along the  
wood;

The wood is nigh as full of thieves as  
leaves:

If both be slain, I am rid of thee; but  
yet,  
Sir Scullion, canst thou use that spit of  
thine?

Fight, an thou canst: I have miss'd the  
only way.'

So till the dusk that follow'd even-  
song  
Rode on the two, reviler and reviled;  
Then after one long slope was mounted,  
saw,

Bowl-shaped, thro' tops of many thousand  
pines

A gloomy-gladed hollow slowly sink  
To westward — in the deeps whereof a  
mere,

Round as the red eye of an Eagle-owl,  
Under the half-dead sunset glared; and  
shouts

Ascended, and there brake a serving  
man

Flying from out of the black wood, and  
crying,

'They have bound my lord to cast him in  
the mere.'

Then Gareth, 'Bound am I to right the  
wrong'd,

But straitlier bound am I to bide with  
thee.'

And when the damsel spake contempt-  
uously,

'Lead, and I follow,' Gareth cried again,  
'Follow, I lead!' so down among the  
pines

He plunged; and there, blackshadow'd  
nigh the mere,

And mid-thigh-deep in bulrushes and  
reed,

Saw six tall men haling a seventh along,  
A stone about his neck to drown him  
in it.

Three with good blows he quieted, but  
three

Fled thro' the pines; and Gareth loosed  
the stone

From off his neck, then in the mere beside  
Tumbled it; oilly bubbled up the mere.

Last, Gareth loosed his bonds and on free  
feet

Set him, a stalwart Baron, Arthur's friend.



‘Well that ye came, or else these  
 caitiff rogues  
 Had wreak’d themselves on me; good  
 cause is theirs  
 To hate me, for my wont hath ever been  
 To catch my thief, and then like vermin  
 here  
 Drown him, and with a stone about his  
 neck;  
 And under this wan water many of them  
 Lie rotting, but at night let go the stone,  
 And rise, and flickering in a grimly light  
 Dance on the mere. Good now, ye have  
 saved a life  
 Worth somewhat as the cleanser of this  
 wood.  
 And fain would I reward thee worship-  
 fully.  
 What guerdon will ye?’

Gareth sharply spake,  
 ‘None! for the deed’s sake have I done  
 the deed,  
 In uttermost obedience to the King.  
 But wilt thou yield this damsel harbour-  
 age?’

Whereat the Baron saying, ‘I well  
 believe  
 You be of Arthur’s Table,’ a light laugh  
 Broke from Lynette, ‘Ay, truly of a truth,  
 And in a sort, being Arthur’s kitchen-  
 knave! —  
 But deem not I accept thee aught the  
 more,  
 Scullion, for running sharply with thy  
 spit  
 Down on a rout of craven foresters.  
 A thresher with his flail had scatter’d  
 them.  
 Nay — for thou smellest of the kitchen  
 still.  
 But an this lord will yield us harbourage,  
 well.’

So she spake. A league beyond the  
 wood,  
 All in a full-fair manor and a rich,  
 His towers where that day a feast had  
 been  
 Held in high hall, and many a viand left,  
 And many a costly cate, received the  
 three.

And there they placed a peacock in his  
 pride  
 Before the damsel, and the Baron set  
 Gareth beside her, but at once she rose.

‘Meseems, that here is much dis-  
 courtesy,  
 Setting this knave, Lord Baron, at my  
 side.

Hear me — this morn I stood in Arthur’s  
 hall,  
 And pray’d the King would grant me  
 Lancelot  
 To fight the brotherhood of Day and  
 Night —

The last a monster unsubduable  
 Of any save of him for whom I call’d —  
 Suddenly bawls this frontless kitchen-  
 knave,

“The quest is mine; thy kitchen-knave  
 am I,  
 And mighty thro’ thy meats and drinks  
 am I.”

Then Arthur all at once gone mad  
 replies,

“Go therefore,” and so gives the quest  
 to him —

Him — here — a villain fitter to stick  
 swine

Than ride abroad redressing woman’s  
 wrong,

Or sit beside a noble gentlewoman.’

Then half-ashamed and part-amazed,  
 the lord  
 Now look’d at one and now at other, left  
 The damsel by the peacock in his pride,  
 And, seating Gareth at another board,  
 Sat down beside him, ate and then began.

‘Friend, whether thou be kitchen-  
 knave, or not,

Or whether it be the maiden’s fantasy,  
 And whether she be mad, or else the  
 King,

Or both or neither, or thyself be mad,  
 I ask not: but thou strikest a strong  
 stroke;

For strong thou art and goodly there-  
 withal,

And saver of my life; and therefore now,  
 For here be mighty men to joust with,  
 weigh



Whether thou wilt not with thy damsel  
back  
To crave again Sir Lancelot of the King.  
Thy pardon; I but speak for thine avail,  
The savor of my life.'

And Gareth said,  
'Full pardon, but I follow up the quest,  
Despite of Day and Night and Death  
and Hell.'

So when, next morn, the lord whose  
life he saved  
Had, some brief space, convey'd them on  
their way  
And left them with God-speed, Sir Gareth  
spake,  
'Lead, and I follow.' Haughtily she  
replied,

'I fly no more: I allow thee for an  
hour.  
Lion and stoat have isled together,  
knave,  
In time of flood. Nay, furthermore,  
methinks  
Some ruth is mine for thee. Back wilt  
thou, fool?  
For hard by here is one will overthrow  
And slay thee: then will I to court again,  
And shame the King for only yielding  
me  
My champion from the ashes of his  
hearth.'

To whom Sir Gareth answer'd cour-  
teously,  
'Say thou thy say, and I will do my  
deed.  
Allow me for mine hour, and thou wilt  
find  
My fortunes all as fair as hers who lay  
Among the ashes and wedded the King's  
son.'

Then to the shore of one of those long  
loops  
Wherethro' the serpent river coil'd, they  
came.  
Rough-thicketed were the banks and  
steep; the stream  
Full, narrow; this a bridge of single arc  
Took at a leap; and on the further side

Arose a silk pavilion, gay with gold  
In streaks and rays, and all Lent-lily in  
hue,  
Save that the dome was purple, and  
above,  
Crimson, a slender banneret fluttering.  
And therebefore the lawless warrior  
paced  
Unarm'd, and calling, 'Damsel, is this he,  
The champion thou hast brought from  
Arthur's hall?  
For whom we let thee pass.' 'Nay,  
nay,' she said,  
'Sir Morning-Star. The King in utter  
scorn  
Of thee and thy much folly hath sent thee  
here  
His kitchen-knave: and look thou to  
thyself:  
See that he fall not on thee suddenly,  
And slay thee unarm'd: he is not knight  
but knave.'

Then at his call, 'O daughters of the  
Dawn,  
And servants of the Morning-Star, ap-  
proach,  
Arm me,' from out the silken curtain-  
folds  
Bare-footed and bare-headed three fair  
girls  
In gilt and rosy raiment came: their feet  
In dewy grasses glisten'd; and the hair  
All over glanced with dewdrop or with  
gem  
Like sparkles in the stone Avanturine.  
These arm'd him in blue arms, and gave  
a shield  
Blue also, and thereon the morning star.  
And Gareth silent gazed upon the knight,  
Who stood a moment, ere his horse was  
brought,  
Glorying; and in the stream beneath  
him, shone  
Immingled with Heaven's azure waver-  
ingly,  
The gay pavilion and the naked feet,  
His arms, the rosy raiment, and the star.

Then she that watch'd him, 'Where-  
fore stare ye so?  
Thou shakest in thy fear: there yet is  
time:

Flee down the valley before he get to horse.  
Who will cry shame? Thou art not knight but knave.'

Said Gareth, 'Damsel, whether knave or knight,  
Far liefer had I fight a score of times  
Then hear thee so missay me and revile.  
Fair words were best for him who fights for thee;  
But truly foul are better, for they send  
That strength of anger thro' mine arms,  
I know  
That I shall overthrow him.'

And he that bore  
The star, when mounted, cried from o'er the bridge,  
'A kitchen-knave, and sent in scorn of me!  
Such fight not I, but answer scorn with scorn.  
For this were shame to do him further wrong  
Than set him on his feet, and take his horse  
And arms, and so return him to the King.  
Come, therefore, leave thy lady lightly, knave.  
Avoid: for it beseemeth not a knave  
To ride with such a lady.'

'Dog, thou liest.  
I spring from loftier lineage than thine own.'  
He spake; and all at fiery speed the two  
Shock'd on the central bridge, and either spear  
Bent but not brake, and either knight at once,  
Hurl'd as a stone from out of a catapult  
Beyond his horse's crupper and the bridge,  
Fell, as if dead; but quickly rose and drew,  
And Gareth lash'd so fiercely with his brand  
He drave his enemy backward down the bridge,  
The damsel crying, 'Well-stricken, kitchen-knave!'

Till Gareth's shield was cloven; but one stroke  
Laid him that clove it grovelling on the ground.'

Then cried the fall'n, 'Take not my life: I yield.'  
And Gareth, 'So this damsel ask it of me  
Good — I accord it easily as a grace.'  
She reddening, 'Insolent scullion: I of thee?  
I bound to thee for any favour ask'd!'  
'Then shall he die.' And Gareth there unlaced  
His helmet as to slay him, but she shriek'd,  
'Be not so hardy, scullion, as to slay  
One nobler than thyself.' 'Damsel, thy charge  
Is an abounding pleasure to me. Knight,  
Thy life is thine at her command. Arise  
And quickly pass to Arthur's hall, and say  
His kitchen-knave hath sent thee. See thou crave  
His pardon for thy breaking of his laws.  
Myself, when I return, will plead for thee.  
Thy shield is mine — farewell; and, damsel, thou,  
Lead, and I follow.'

And fast away she fled.  
Then when he came upon her, spake,  
'Methought,  
Knave, when I watch'd thee striking on the bridge  
The savour of thy kitchen came upon me  
A little faintlier: but the wind hath changed:  
I scent it twenty-fold.' And then she sang,  
'"O morning star" (not that tall felon there  
Whom thou by sorcery or unhappiness  
Or some device, hast foully overthrown),  
"O morning star that smilest in the blue,  
O star, my morning dream hath proven true,  
Smile sweetly, thou! my love hath smiled on me."

'But thou begone, take counsel, and  
away,  
For hard by here is one that guards a  
ford —  
The second brother in their fool's para-  
ble —  
Will pay thee all thy wages, and to boot.  
Care not for shame: thou art not knight  
but knave.'

To whom Sir Gareth answer'd laugh-  
ingly,  
'Parables? Hear a parable of the knave.  
When I was kitchen-knave among the  
rest  
Fierce was the hearth, and one of my  
co-mates  
Own'd a rough dog, to whom he cast his  
coat,  
"Guard it," and there was none to med-  
dle with it.  
And such a coat art thou, and thee the  
King  
Gave me to guard, and such a dog am I,  
To worry, and not to flee — and — knight  
or knave —  
The knave that doth thee service as full  
knight  
Is all as good, meseems, as any knight  
Toward thy sister's freeing.'

'Ay, Sir Knave!  
Ay, knave, because thou strikest as a  
knight,  
Being but knave, I hate thee all the  
more.'

'Fair damsel, you should worship me  
the more,  
That, being but knave, I throw thine  
enemies.'

'Ay, ay,' she said, 'but thou shalt meet  
thy match.'

So when they touch'd the second river-  
loop,  
Huge on a huge red horse, and all in mail  
Burnish'd to blinding, shone the Noon-  
day Sun  
Beyond a raging shallow. As if the  
flower,  
That blows a globe of after arrowlets,

Ten thousand-fold had grown, flash'd the  
fierce shield,  
All sun; and Gareth's eyes had flying  
blots  
Before them when he turn'd from watch-  
ing him.  
He from beyond the roaring shallow  
roar'd,  
'What doest thou, brother, in my marches  
here?'  
And she athwart the shallow shrill'd  
again,  
'Here is a kitchen-knave from Arthur's  
hall  
Hath overthrown thy brother, and hath  
his arms.'  
'Ugh!' cried the Sun, and vizoring up a  
red  
And cipher face of rounded foolishness,  
Push'd horse across the foanings of the  
ford,  
Whom Gareth met midstream: no room  
was there  
For lance or tourney-skill: four strokes  
they struck  
With sword, and these were mighty; the  
new knight  
Had fear he might be shamed; but as the  
Sun  
Heaved up a ponderous arm to strike the  
fifth,  
The hoof of his horse slipt in the stream,  
the stream  
Descended, and the Sun was wash'd  
away.

Then Gareth laid his lance athwart the  
ford;  
So drew him home; but he that fought  
no more,  
As being all bone-batter'd on the rock,  
Yielded; and Gareth sent him to the  
King.  
'Myself when I return will plead for  
thee.'  
'Lead, and I follow.' Quietly she led.  
'Hath not the good wind, damsel,  
changed again?'  
'Nay, not a point: nor art thou victor  
here.  
There lies a ridge of slate across the ford;  
His horse thereon stumbled — ay, for I  
saw it.

“O Sun” (not this strong fool whom  
thou, Sir Knave,  
Hast overthrown thro’ mere unhappiness),  
“O Sun, that wakenest all to bliss or  
pain,  
O moon, that layest all to sleep again,  
Shine sweetly: twice my love hath  
smiled on me.”

‘What knowest thou of lovesong or of  
love?  
Nay, nay, God wot, so thou wert nobly  
born,  
Thou hast a pleasant presence. Yea,  
perchance, —

“O dewy flowers that open to the  
sun,  
O dewy flowers that close when day is  
done,  
Blow sweetly: twice my love hath smiled  
on me.”

‘What knowest thou of flowers, except,  
belike,  
To garnish meats with? hath not our  
good King  
Who lent me thee, the flower of kitchen-  
dom,  
A foolish love for flowers? what stick ye  
round  
The pasty? wherewithal deck the boar’s  
head?  
Flowers? nay, the boar hath rosemaries  
and bay.

“O birds, that warble to the morning  
sky,  
O birds that warble as the day goes by,  
Sing sweetly: twice my love hath smiled  
on me.”

‘What knowest thou of birds, lark,  
mavis, merle,  
Linnet? what dream ye when they utter  
forth  
May-music growing with the growing  
light,  
Their sweet sun-worship? these be for  
the snare  
(So runs thy fancy), these be for the spit,  
Larding and basting. See thou have  
not now

Larded thy last, except thou turn and  
fly.  
There stands the third fool of their  
allegory.’

For there beyond a bridge of treble  
bow,  
All in a rose-red from the west, and all  
Naked it seem’d, and glowing in the  
broad  
Deep-dimpled current underneath, the  
knight,  
That named himself the Star of Evening,  
stood.

And Gareth, ‘Wherefore waits the  
madman there  
Naked in open dayshine?’ ‘Nay,’ she  
cried,  
‘Not naked, only wrapt in harden’d skins  
That fit him like his own; and so ye  
cleave  
His armour off him, these will turn the  
blade.’

Then the third brother shouted o’er  
the bridge,  
‘O brother-star, why shine ye here so  
low?  
Thy ward is higher up: but have ye slain  
The damsel’s champion?’ and the damsel  
cried,

‘No star of thine, but shot from Arthur’s  
heaven  
With all disaster unto thine and thee!  
For both thy younger brethren have gone  
down  
Before this youth; and so wilt thou, Sir  
Star;  
Art thou not old?’

‘Old, damsel, old and hard,  
Old, with the might and breath of twenty  
boys.’  
Said Gareth, ‘Old, and over-bold in  
brag!  
But that same strength which threw the  
Morning Star  
Can throw the Evening.’

Then that other blew  
A hard and deadly note upon the horn.

'Approach and arm me!' With slow  
 steps from out  
 An old storm-beaten, russet, many-stain'd  
 Pavilion, forth a grizzled damsel came,  
 And arm'd him in old arms, and brought  
 a helm  
 With but a drying evergreen for crest,  
 And gave a shield whereon the Star of  
 Even  
 Half-tarnish'd and half-bright, his em-  
 blem, shone.  
 But when it glitter'd o'er the saddle-bow,  
 They madly hurl'd together on the bridge;  
 And Gareth overthrew him, lighted, drew,  
 There met him drawn, and overthrew him  
 again,  
 But up like fire he started: and as oft  
 As Gareth brought him grovelling on his  
 knees,  
 So many a time he vaulted up again;  
 Till Gareth panted hard, and his great  
 heart,  
 Foredooming all his trouble was in vain,  
 Labour'd within him, for he seem'd as one  
 That all in later, sadder age begins  
 To war against ill uses of a life,  
 But these from all his life arise, and cry,  
 'Thou hast made us lords, and canst not  
 put us down!'  
 He half despairs; so Gareth seem'd to  
 strike  
 Vainly, the damsel clamouring all the while,  
 'Well done, knave-knight, well stricken,  
 O good knight-knave—  
 O knave, as noble as any of all the  
 knights—  
 Shame me not, shame me not. I have  
 prophesied—  
 Strike, thou art worthy of the Table  
 Round—  
 His arms are old, he trusts the harden'd  
 skin—  
 Strike—strike—the wind will never  
 change again.'  
 And Gareth hearing ever stronger smote,  
 And hew'd great pieces of his armour off  
 him,  
 But lash'd in vain against the harden'd  
 skin,  
 And could not wholly bring him under,  
 more  
 Than loud Southwesterns, rolling ridge  
 on ridge,

The buoy that rides at sea, and dips and  
 springs  
 For ever; till at length Sir Gareth's brand  
 Clash'd his, and brake it utterly to the  
 hilt.  
 'I have thee now;' but forth that other  
 sprang,  
 And, all unknighthlike, writhed his wiry  
 arms  
 Around him, till he felt, despite his mail,  
 Strangled, but straining ev'n his utter-  
 most  
 Cast, and so hurl'd him headlong o'er the  
 bridge  
 Down to the river, sink or swim, and  
 cried,  
 'Lead, and I follow.'

But the damsel said,  
 'I lead no longer; ride thou at my side;  
 Thou art the kingliest of all kitchen-  
 knaves.

"O trefoil, sparkling on the rainy  
 plain,  
 O rainbow with three colours after rain,  
 Shine sweetly: thrice my love hath  
 smiled on me."

'Sir,—and, good faith, I fain had  
 added— Knight,  
 But that I heard thee call thyself a  
 knave,—  
 Shamed am I that I so rebuked, reviled,  
 Missaid thee; noble I am; and thought  
 the King  
 Scorn'd me and mine; and now thy  
 pardon, friend,  
 For thou hast ever answer'd courteously,  
 And wholly bold thou art, and meek  
 withal  
 As any of Arthur's best, but, being knave,  
 Hast mazed my wit: I marvel what thou  
 art.'

'Damsel,' he said, 'you be not all to  
 blame,  
 Saving that you mistrusted our good  
 King  
 Would handle scorn, or yield you, asking,  
 one  
 Not fit to cope your quest. You said  
 your say;

Mine answer was my deed. Good  
 sooth! I hold  
 He scarce is knight, yea but half-man,  
 nor meet  
 To fight for gentle damsel, he, who lets  
 His heart be stirr'd with any foolish heat  
 At any gentle damsel's waywardness.  
 Shamed! care not! thy foul sayings  
 fought for me:  
 And seeing now thy words are fair, me-  
 thinks  
 There rides no knight, not Lancelot, his  
 great self,  
 Hath force to quell me.'

Nigh upon that hour  
 When the lone hern forgets his melan-  
 choly,  
 Lets down his other leg, and stretching,  
 dreams  
 Of goodly supper in the distant pool,  
 Then turn'd the noble damsel smiling at  
 him,  
 And told him of a cavern hard at hand,  
 Where bread and baken meats and good  
 red wine  
 Of Southland, which the Lady Lyonors  
 Had sent her coming champion, waited  
 him.

Anon they past a narrow comb wherein  
 Were slabs of rock with figures, knights  
 on horse  
 Sculptured, and deckt in slowly-waning  
 hues.  
 'Sir Knave, my knight, a hermit once  
 was here,  
 Whose holy hand hath fashion'd on the  
 rock  
 The war of Time against the soul of man.  
 And yon four fools have suck'd their alle-  
 gory  
 From these damp walls, and taken but  
 the form.  
 Know ye not these?' and Gareth lookt  
 and read—  
 In letters like to those the vexillary  
 Hath left crag-carven o'er the streaming  
 Gelt—  
 'PHOSPHORUS,' then 'MERIDIES'—'HES-  
 PERUS'—  
 'NOX'—'MORS,' beneath five figures,  
 armed men,

Slab after slab, their faces forward all,  
 And running down the Soul, a Shape that  
 fled  
 With broken wings, torn raiment and  
 loose hair,  
 For help and shelter to the hermit's cave.  
 'Follow the faces, and we find it. Look,  
 Who comes behind!'

For one—delay'd at first  
 Thro' helping back the dislocated Kay  
 To Camelot, then by what thereafter  
 chanced,  
 The damsel's headlong error thro' the  
 wood—  
 Sir Lancelot, having swum the river-  
 loops—  
 His blue shield-lions cover'd—softly drew  
 Behind the twain, and when he saw the  
 star  
 Gleam, on Sir Gareth's turning to him,  
 cried,  
 'Stay, felon knight, I avenge me for my  
 friend.'  
 And Gareth crying prick'd against the cry;  
 But when they closed—in a moment—in at  
 one touch  
 Of that skill'd spear, the wonder of the  
 world—  
 Went sliding down so easily, and fell,  
 That when he found the grass within his  
 hands  
 He laugh'd; the laughter jarr'd upon  
 Lynette:  
 Harshly she ask'd him, 'Shamed and over-  
 thrown,  
 And tumbled back into the kitchen-knave,  
 Why laugh ye? that ye blew your boast  
 in vain?'  
 'Nay, noble damsel, but that I, the son  
 Of old King Lot and good Queen Belli-  
 cent,  
 And victor of the bridges and the ford,  
 And knight of Arthur, here lie thrown by  
 whom  
 I know not, all thro' mere unhappiness—  
 Device and sorcery and unhappiness—  
 Out, sword; we are thrown!' And  
 Lancelot answer'd 'Prince,  
 O Gareth—thro' the mere unhappiness  
 Of one who came to help thee, not to harm,  
 Lancelot, and all as glad to find thee whole,  
 As on the day when Arthur knighted him.'

Then Gareth, 'Thou — Lancelot! —  
 thine the hand  
 That threw me? And some chance to mar  
 the boast  
 Thy brethren of thee make — which could  
 not chance —  
 Had sent thee down before a lesser  
 spear,  
 Shamed had I been, and sad — O Lancelot  
 — thou!'

Whereat the maiden, petulant, 'Lance-  
 lot,  
 Why came ye not, when call'd? and  
 wherefore now  
 Come ye, not call'd? I gloried in my  
 knave,  
 Who being still rebuked, would answer  
 still  
 Courteous as any knight — but now, if  
 knight,  
 The marvel dies, and leaves me fool'd  
 and tricked,  
 And only wondering wherefore play'd  
 upon:  
 And doubtful whether I and mine be  
 scorn'd.  
 Where should be truth if not in Arthur's  
 hall,  
 In Arthur's presence? Knight, knave,  
 prince and fool,  
 I hate thee and for ever.'

And Lancelot said,  
 'Blessed be thou, Sir Gareth! knight  
 art thou  
 To the King's best wish. O damsel, be  
 you wise  
 To call him shamed, who is but over-  
 thrown?  
 Thrown have I been, nor once, but many  
 a time.  
 Victor from vanquish'd issues at the last,  
 And overthrower from being overthrown.  
 With sword we have not striven; and thy  
 good horse  
 And thou are weary; yet not less I felt  
 Thy manhood thro' that wearied lance  
 of thine.  
 Well hast thou done; for all the stream  
 is freed,  
 And thou hast wreak'd his justice on his  
 foes,

And when reviled, hast answer'd gra-  
 ciously,  
 And makest merry when overthrown.  
 Prince, Knight,  
 Hail, Knight and Prince, and of our  
 Table Round!'

And then when turning to Lynette he  
 told  
 The tale of Gareth, petulantly she said,  
 'Ay well — ay well — for worse than being  
 fool'd  
 Of others, is to fool one's self. A cave,  
 Sir Lancelot, is hard by, with meats and  
 drinks  
 And forage for the horse, and flint for fire.  
 But all about it flies a honeysuckle.  
 Seek, till we find.' And when they  
 sought and found,  
 Sir Gareth drank and ate, and all his life  
 Past into sleep; on whom the maiden  
 gazed.  
 'Sound sleep be thine! sound cause to  
 sleep hast thou.  
 Wake lusty! Seem I not as tender to him  
 As any mother? Ay, but such a one  
 As all day long hath rated at her child,  
 And vext his day, but blesses him asleep—  
 Good lord, how sweetly smells the honey-  
 suckle  
 In the hush'd night, as if the world were  
 one

Of utter peace, and love, and gentleness!  
 O Lancelot, Lancelot' — and she clapt  
 her hands —  
 'Full merry am I to find my goodly knave  
 Is knight and noble. See now, sworn  
 have I,  
 Else yon black felon had not let me pass,  
 To bring thee back to do the battle with  
 him.  
 Thus an thou goest, he will fight thee first;  
 Who doubts thee victor? so will my  
 knight-knave  
 Miss the full flower of this accomplish-  
 ment.'

Said Lancelot, 'Peradventure he, you  
 name,  
 May know my shield. Let Gareth, an  
 he will,  
 Change his for mine, and take my charger,  
 fresh,



Not to be spurr'd, loving the battle as well  
As he that rides him.' 'Lancelot-like,'  
she said,  
'Courteous in this, Lord Lancelot, as in  
all.'

And Gareth, wakening, fieroely clutch'd  
the shield;  
'Rampye lance-splintering lions, on whom  
all spears  
Are rotten sticks! ye seem agape to roar!  
Yea, ramp and roar at leaving of your  
lord! —  
Care not, good beasts, so well I care for  
you.  
O noble Lancelot, from my hold on these  
Streams virtue — fire — thro' one that will  
not shame  
Even the shadow of Lancelot under shield.  
Hence: let us go.'

Silent the silent field

They traversed. Arthur's harp tho'  
summer-wan,  
In counter motion to the clouds, allured  
The glance of Gareth dreaming on his  
liege.  
A star shot: 'Lo,' said Gareth, 'the foe  
falls!'  
An owl whoopt: 'Hark the victor peal-  
ing there!'  
Suddenly she that rode upon his left  
Clung to the shield that Lancelot lent  
him, crying,  
'Yield, yield him this again: 'tis he must  
fight:  
I curse the tongue that all thro' yesterday  
Reviled thee, and hath wrought on  
Lancelot now  
To lend thee horse and shield: wonders  
ye have done;  
Miracles ye cannot: here is glory enow  
In having flung the three: I see thee  
maim'd,  
Mangled: I swear thou canst not fling  
the fourth.'

'And wherefore, damsel? tell me all  
ye know.  
You cannot scare me; nor rough face, or  
voice,  
Brute bulk of limb, or boundless savagery  
Appall me from the quest.'

'Nay, Prince,' she cried,  
'God wot, I never look'd upon the face,  
Seeing he never rides abroad by day;  
But watch'd him have I like a phantom  
pass  
Chilling the night: nor have I heard the  
voice.  
Always he made his mouthpiece of a page  
Who came and went, and still reported  
him  
As closing in himself the strength of ten,  
And when his anger tare him, massacring  
Man, woman, lad and girl — yea, the soft  
babe!  
Some hold that he hath swallow'd infant  
flesh,  
Monster! O Prince, I went for Lancelot  
first,  
The quest is Lancelot's: give him back  
the shield.'

Said Gareth laughing, 'An he fight for  
this,  
Belike he wins it as the better man:  
Thus — and not else!'

But Lancelot on him urged

All the devisings of their chivalry  
When one might meet a mightier than  
himself;  
How best to manage horse, lance, sword  
and shield,  
And so fill up the gap where force might  
fail  
With skill and fineness. Instant were  
his words.

Then Gareth, 'Here be rules. I know  
but one —  
To dash against mine enemy and to  
win.  
Yet have I watch'd thee victor in the  
joust,  
And seen thy way.' 'Heaven help thee,'  
sigh'd Lynette.

Then for a space, and under cloud that  
grew  
To thunder-gloom palling all stars, they  
rode  
In converse till she made her palfrey halt,  
Lifted an arm, and softly whisper'd,  
'There.'

And all the three were silent seeing,  
 pitch'd  
 Beside the Castle Perilous on flat field,  
 A huge pavilion like a mountain peak  
 Sunder the glooming crimson on the  
 marge,  
 Black, with black banner, and a long  
 black horn  
 Beside it hanging; which Sir Gareth  
 graspt,  
 And so, before the two could hinder him,  
 Sent all his heart and breath thro' all the  
 horn.  
 Echo'd the walls; a light twinkled; anon  
 Came lights and lights, and once again  
 he blew;  
 Whereon were hollow tramlings up and  
 down  
 And muffled voices heard, and shadows  
 past;  
 Till high above him, circled with her  
 maids,  
 The Lady Lyonors at a window stood,  
 Beautiful among lights, and waving to him  
 White hands, and courtesy; but when  
 the Prince  
 Three times had blown — after long hush  
 — at last —  
 The huge pavilion slowly yielded up,  
 Thro' those black foldings, that which  
 housed therein.  
 High on a nightblack horse, in nightblack  
 arms,  
 With white breast-bone, and barren ribs  
 of Death,  
 And crown'd with fleshless laughter —  
 some ten steps —  
 In the half-light — thro' the dim dawn —  
 advanced  
 The monster, and then paused, and spake  
 no word.

But Gareth spake and all indignantly,  
 'Fool, for thou hast, men say, the strength  
 of ten,  
 Canst thou not trust the limbs thy God  
 hath given,  
 But must, to make the terror of thee more,  
 Trick thyself out in ghastly imageries  
 Of that which Life hath done with, and  
 the clod,  
 Less dull than thou, will hide with  
 mantling flowers

As if for pity?' But he spake no word;  
 Which set the horror higher: a maiden  
 swoon'd;  
 The Lady Lyonors wrung her hands and  
 wept,  
 As doom'd to be the bride of Night and  
 Death;  
 Sir Gareth's head prickled beneath his  
 helm;  
 And ev'n Sir Lancelot thro' his warm  
 blood felt  
 Ice strike, and all that mark'd him were  
 aghast.

At once Sir Lancelot's charger fiercely  
 neigh'd,  
 And Death's dark war-horse bounded  
 forward with him.  
 Then those that did not blink the terror,  
 saw  
 That Death was cast to ground, and  
 slowly rose.  
 But with one stroke Sir Gareth split the  
 skull.  
 Half fell to right and half to left and  
 lay.  
 Then with a stronger buffet he clove the  
 helm  
 As throughly as the skull; and out from  
 this  
 Issued the bright face of a blooming  
 boy  
 Fresh as a flower new-born, and crying,  
 'Knight,  
 Slay me not: my three brethren bade me  
 do it,  
 To make a horror all about the house,  
 And stay the world from Lady Lyonors.  
 They never dream'd the passes would be  
 past.'  
 Answer'd Sir Gareth graciously to one  
 Not many a moon his younger, 'My fair  
 child,  
 What madness made thee challenge the  
 chief knight  
 Of Arthur's hall?' 'Fair Sir, they bade  
 me do it.  
 They hate the King, and Lancelot, the  
 King's friend,  
 They hoped to slay him somewhere on  
 the stream,  
 They never dream'd the passes could be  
 past.'

Then sprang the happier day from  
underground;  
And Lady Lyonors and her house, with  
dance  
And revel and song, made merry over  
Death,  
As being after all their foolish fears  
And horrors only proven a blooming boy.  
So large mirth lived and Gareth won the  
quest.

And he that told the tale in older times  
Says that Sir Gareth wedded Lyonors,  
But he, that told it later, says Lynette.

## THE MARRIAGE OF GERAINT.

THE brave Geraint, a knight of Arthur's  
court,

A tributary prince of Devon, one  
Of that great Order of the Table Round,  
Had married Enid, Yniol's only child,  
And loved her, as he loved the light of  
Heaven.

And as the light of Heaven varies, now  
At sunrise, now at sunset, now by night  
With moon and trembling stars, so loved  
Geraint

To make her beauty vary day by day.  
In crimsons and in purples and in gems.  
And Enid, but to please her husband's  
eye,

Who first had found and loved her in a  
state

Of broken fortunes, daily fronted him  
In some fresh splendour; and the Queen  
herself,

Grateful to Prince Geraint for service  
done,

Loved her, and often with her own white  
hands

Array'd and deck'd her, as the loveliest,  
Next after her own self, in all the court.  
And Enid loved the Queen, and with true  
heart

Adored her, as the stateliest and the best  
And loveliest of all women upon earth.  
And seeing them so tender and so close,  
Long in their common love rejoiced  
Geraint.

But when a rumour rose about the  
Queen,  
Touching her guilty love for Lancelot,

Tho' yet there lived no proof, nor yet  
was heard

The world's loud whisper breaking into  
storm,

Not less Geraint believed it; and there  
fell

A horror on him, lest his gentle wife,  
Thro' that great tenderness for Guinevere,  
Had suffer'd, or should suffer any taint  
In nature: wherefore going to the King,  
He made this pretext, that his principedom  
lay

Close on the borders of a territory,  
Wherein were bandit earls, and caitiff  
knights,

Assassins, and all flyers from the hand  
Of Justice, and whatever loathes a law:  
And therefore, till the King himself  
should please

To cleanse this common sewer of all his  
realm,

He craved a fair permission to depart,  
And there defend his marches; and the  
King,

Mused for a little on his plea, but, last,  
Allowing it, the Prince and Enid rode,  
And fifty knights rode with them, to the  
shores

Of Severn, and they past to their own  
land;

Where, thinking, that if ever yet was wife  
True to her lord, mine shall be so to me,  
He compass'd her with sweet observances  
And worship, never leaving her, and grew  
Forgetful of his promise to the King,  
Forgetful of the falcon and the hunt,  
Forgetful of the tilt and tournament,  
Forgetful of his glory and his name,  
Forgetful of his principedom and its cares.  
And this forgetfulness was hateful to her.  
And by and by the people, when they  
met

In twos and threes, or fuller companies,  
Began to scoff and jeer and babble of him  
As of a prince whose manhood was all  
gone,

And molten down in mere uxoriousness.  
And this she gather'd from the people's  
eyes:

This too the women who attired her  
head,

To please her, dwelling on his boundless  
love,

Told Enid, and they sadden'd her the more :

And day by day she thought to tell Geraint,  
But could not out of bashful delicacy;  
While he that watched her sadden, was the more  
Suspicious that her nature had a taint.

At last, it chanced that on a summer morn  
(They sleeping each by either) the new sun

Beat thro' the blindless casement of the room,  
And heated the strong warrior in his dreams;

Who, moving, cast the coverlet aside,  
And bared the knotted column of his throat,

The massive square of his heroic breast,  
And arms on which the standing muscle sloped,

As slopes a wild brook o'er a little stone,  
Running too vehemently to break upon it.  
And Enid woke and sat beside the couch,  
Admiring him, and thought within herself,

Was ever man so grandly made as he?  
Then, like a shadow, past the people's talk  
And accusation of uxoriousness  
Across her mind, and bowing over him,  
Low to her own heart piteously she said :

'O noble breast and all-puissant arms,  
Am I the cause, I the poor cause that men  
Reproach you, saying all your force is gone?

I *am* the cause, because I dare not speak  
And tell him what I think and what they say.

And yet I hate that he should linger here;  
I cannot love my lord and not his name.  
Far liefer had I gird his harness on him,  
And ride with him to battle and stand by,  
And watch his mighty hand striking great blows

At caitiffs and at wrongers of the world.  
Far better were I laid in the dark earth,  
Not hearing any more his noble voice,  
Not to be folded more in these dear arms,  
And darken'd from the high light in his eyes,

Than that my lord thro' me should suffer shame.

Am I so bold, and could I so stand by,  
And see my dear lord wounded in the strife,

Or maybe pierced to death before mine eyes,

And yet not dare to tell him what I think,  
And how men slur him, saying all his force  
Is melted into mere effeminacy?

O me, I fear that I am no true wife.'

Half inwardly, half audibly she spoke,  
And the strong passion in her made her weep

True tears upon his broad and naked breast,  
And these awoke him, and by great mischance

He heard but fragments of her later words,  
And that she fear'd she was not a true wife.

And then he thought, 'In spite of all my care,

For all my pains, poor man, for all my pains,

She is not faithful to me, and I see her  
Weeping for some gay knight in Arthur's hall.'

Then tho' he loved and revered her too much

To dream she could be guilty of foul act,  
Right thro' his manful breast darted the pang

That makes a man, in the sweet face of her

Whom he loves most, lonely and miserable.

At this he hurl'd his huge limbs out of bed,

And shook his drowsy squire awake and cried,

'My charger and her palfrey;' then to her,

'I will ride forth into the wilderness;  
For tho' it seems my spurs are yet to win,

I have not fall'n so low as some would wish.

And thou, put on thy worst and meanest dress

And ride with me.' And Enid ask'd, amazed,

'If Enid errs, let Enid learn her fault.'  
But he, 'I charge thee, ask not, but obey.'

Then she bethought her of a faded silk,  
 A faded mantle and a faded veil,  
 And moving toward a cedarn cabinet,  
 Wherein she kept them folded reverently  
 With sprigs of summer laid between the  
 folds,  
 She took them, and array'd herself  
 therein,  
 Remembering when first he came on her  
 Drest in that dress, and how he loved  
 her in it,  
 And all her foolish fears about the dress,  
 And all his journey to her, as himself  
 Had told her, and their coming to the  
 court.

For Arthur on the Whitsuntide before  
 Held court at old Caerleon upon Usk.  
 There on a day, he sitting high in hall,  
 Before him came a forester of Dean,  
 Wet from the woods, with notice of a  
 hart  
 Taller than all his fellows, milky-white,  
 First seen that day : these things he told  
 the King.  
 Then the good King gave order to let  
 blow  
 His horns for hunting on the morrow  
 morn.  
 And when the Queen petition'd for his  
 leave  
 To see the hunt, allow'd it easily.  
 So with the morning all the court were  
 gone.  
 But Guinevere lay late into the morn,  
 Lost in sweet dreams, and dreaming of  
 her love  
 For Lancelot, and forgetful of the hunt;  
 But rose at last, a single maiden with her,  
 Took horse, and forded Usk, and gain'd  
 the wood;  
 There, on a little knoll beside it, stay'd  
 Waiting to hear the hounds; but heard  
 instead  
 A sudden sound of hoofs, for Prince  
 Geraint,  
 Late also, wearing neither hunting-dress  
 Nor weapon, save a golden-hilted brand,  
 Came quickly flashing thro' the shallow  
 ford  
 Behind them, and so gallop'd up the  
 knoll.  
 A purple scarf, at either end whereof

There swung an apple of the purest gold,  
 Sway'd round about him, as he gallop'd  
 up  
 To join them, glancing like a dragon-fly  
 In summer suit and silks of holiday.  
 Low bow'd the tributary Prince, and she,  
 Sweetly and statelily, and with all grace  
 Of womanhood and queenhood, answer'd  
 him :  
 'Late, late, Sir Prince,' she said, 'later  
 than we !'  
 'Yea, noble Queen,' he answer'd, 'and  
 so late  
 That I but come like you to see the hunt,  
 Not join it.' 'Therefore wait with me,'  
 she said ;  
 'For on this little knoll, if anywhere,  
 There is good chance that we shall hear  
 the hounds :  
 Here often they break covert at our feet.'

And while they listen'd for the distant  
 hunt,  
 And chiefly for the baying of Cavall,  
 King Arthur's hound of deepest mouth,  
 there rode  
 Full slowly by a knight, lady, and dwarf;  
 Whereof the dwarf lagg'd latest, and the  
 knight  
 Had vizor up, and show'd a youthful  
 face,  
 Imperious, and of haughtiest lineaments.  
 And Guinevere, not mindful of his face  
 In the King's hall, desired his name, and  
 sent  
 Her maiden to demand it of the dwarf;  
 Who being vicious, old and irritable,  
 And doubling all his master's vice of  
 pride,  
 Made answer sharply that she should not  
 know.  
 'Then will I ask it of himself,' she said.  
 'Nay, by my faith, thou shalt not,' cried  
 the dwarf;  
 'Thou art not worthy ev'n to speak of  
 him ;'  
 And when she put her horse toward the  
 knight,  
 Struck at her with his whip, and she re-  
 turn'd  
 Indignant to the Queen; whereat Geraint  
 Exclaiming, 'Surely I will learn the  
 name,'

Made sharply to the dwarf, and ask'd it  
of him,

Who answer'd as before; and when the  
Prince

Had put his horse in motion toward the  
knight,

Struck at him with his whip, and cut his  
cheek.

The Prince's blood spirted upon the scarf,  
Dyeing it; and his quick, instinctive hand  
Caught at the hilt, as to abolish him:

But he, from his exceeding manfulness  
And pure nobility of temperament,  
Wroth to be wroth at such a worm, re-  
frain'd

From ev'n a word, and so returning said:

'I will avenge this insult, noble Queen,  
Done in your maiden's person to yourself:  
And I will track this vermin to their  
earths:

For tho' I ride unarm'd, I do not doubt  
To find, at some place I shall come at,  
arms

On loan, or else for pledge; and, being  
found,

Then will I fight him, and will break his  
pride,

And on the third day will again be here,  
So that I be not fall'n in fight. Farewell.'

'Farewell, fair Prince,' answer'd the  
stately Queen.

'Be prosperous in this journey, as in all;  
And may you light on all things that you  
love,

And live to wed with her whom first you  
love:

But ere you wed with any, bring your  
bride,

And I, were she the daughter of a king,  
Yea, tho' she were a beggar from the  
hedge,

Will clothe her for her bridals like the  
sun.'

And Prince Geraint, now thinking that  
he heard

The noble hart at bay, now the far horn,  
A little vext at losing of the hunt,  
A little at the vile occasion, rode,  
By ups and downs, thro' many a grassy  
glade

And valley, with fixt eye following the  
three.

At last they issued from the world of  
wood,

And climb'd upon a fair and even ridge,  
And show'd themselves against the sky,  
and sank.

And thither came Geraint, and under-  
neath

Beheld the long street of a little town  
In a long valley, on one side whereof,  
White from the mason's hand, a fortress  
rose;

And on one side a castle in decay,  
Beyond a bridge that spann'd a dry  
ravine:

And out of town and valley came a noise  
As of a broad brook o'er a shingly bed  
Brawling, or like a clamour of the rooks  
At distance, ere they settle for the night.

And onward to the fortress rode the  
three,

And enter'd, and were lost behind the  
walls.

'So,' thought Geraint, 'I have track'd  
him to his earth.'

And down the long street riding wearily,  
Found every hostel full, and everywhere  
Was hammer laid to hoof, and the hot  
hiss

And bustling whistle of the youth who  
scour'd

His master's armour; and of such a one  
He ask'd, 'What means the tumult in  
the town?'

Who told him, scouring still, 'The  
sparrow-hawk!'

Then riding close behind an ancient churl,  
Who, smitten by the dusty sloping beam,  
Went sweating underneath a sack of  
corn,

Ask'd yet once more what meant the  
hubbub here?

Who answer'd gruffly, 'Ugh! the sparrow-  
hawk.'

Then riding further past an armourer's,  
Who, with back turn'd, and bow'd above  
his work,

Sat riveting a helmet on his knee,  
He put the self-same query, but the man  
Not turning round, nor looking at him,  
said:



'Friend, he that labours for the sparrow-hawk

Has little time for idle questioners.'

Whereat Geraint flash'd into sudden spleen:

'A thousand pips eat up your sparrow-hawk!

Tits, wrens, and all wing'd nothings peck him dead!

Ye think the rustic cackle of your bourg  
The murmur of the world! What is it to me?

O wretched set of sparrows, one and all,  
Who pipe of nothing but of sparrow-hawks!

Speak, if ye be not like the rest, hawk-mad,

Where can I get me harbourage for the night?

And arms, arms, arms to fight my enemy?  
Speak!'

Whereat the armourer turning all amazed  
And seeing one so gay in purple silks,  
Came forward with the helmet yet in hand

And answer'd, 'Pardon me, O stranger knight;

We hold a tourney here to-morrow morn,  
And there is scanty time for half the work.  
Arms? truth! I know not: all are wanted here.

Harbourage? truth, good truth, I know not, save,

It may be, at Earl Yniol's, o'er the bridge  
Yonder.' He spoke and fell to work again.

Then rode Geraint, a little spleenful yet,  
Across the bridge that spann'd the dry ravine.

There musing sat the hoary-headed Earl,  
(His dress a suit of fray'd magnificence,  
Once fit for feasts of ceremony) and said:

'Whither, fair son?' to whom Geraint replied,

'O friend, I seek a harbourage for the night.'

Then Yniol, 'Enter therefore and partake  
The slender entertainment of a house  
Once rich, now poor, but ever open-door'd.'

'Thanks, venerable friend,' replied Geraint;

'So that ye do not serve me sparrow-hawks

For supper, I will enter, I will eat  
With all the passion of a twelve hours' fast.'

Then sigh'd and smiled the hoary-headed Earl,

And answer'd, 'Graver cause than yours is mine

To curse this hedgerow thief, the sparrow-hawk:

But in, go in; for save yourself desire it,  
We will not touch upon him ev'n in jest.'

Then rode Geraint into the castle court,  
His charger trampling many a prickly star  
Of sprouted thistle on the broken stones.  
He look'd and saw that all was ruinous.  
Here stood a shatter'd archway plumed  
with fern;

And here had fall'n a great part of a tower,

Whole, like a crag that tumbles from the cliff,

And like a crag was gay with wilding flowers:

And high above a piece of turret stair,  
Worn by the feet that now were silent,  
wound

Bare to the sun, and monstrous ivy-stems,  
Claspt the gray walls with hairy-fibred arms,

And suck'd the joining of the stones, and look'd

A knot, beneath, of snakes, aloft, a grove.

And while he waited in the castle court,  
The voice of Enid, Yniol's daughter, rang  
Clear thro' the open casement of the hall,  
Singing; and as the sweet voice of a bird,  
Heard by the lander in a lonely isle,  
Moves him to think what kind of bird it is  
That sings so delicately clear, and make  
Conjecture of the plumage and the form:  
So the sweet voice of Enid moved Geraint;  
And made him like a man abroad at morn  
When first the liquid note beloved of men  
Comes flying over many a windy wave  
To Britain, and in April suddenly  
Breaks from a coppice gemm'd with green  
and red,



And he suspends his converse with a friend,  
 Or it may be the labour of his hands,  
 To think or say, 'There is the nightingale;'  
 So fared it with Geraint, who thought  
 and said,  
 'Here, by God's grace, is the one voice  
 for me.'

It chanced the song that Enid sang  
 was one  
 Of Fortune and her wheel, and Enid  
 sang:

'Turn, Fortune, turn thy wheel and  
 lower the proud;  
 Turn thy wild wheel thro' sunshine,  
 storm, and cloud;  
 Thy wheel and thee we neither love nor  
 hate.

'Turn, Fortune, turn thy wheel with  
 smile or frown;  
 With that wild wheel we go not up or  
 down;  
 Our hoard is little, but our hearts are  
 great.

'Smile and we smile, the lords of many  
 lands;  
 Frown and we smile, the lords of our  
 own hands;  
 For man is man and master of his fate.

'Turn, turn thy wheel above the staring  
 crowd;  
 Thy wheel and thou are shadows in the  
 cloud;  
 Thy wheel and thee we neither love nor  
 hate.'

'Hark, by the bird's song ye may learn  
 the nest,'  
 Said Yniol; 'enter quickly.' Entering  
 then,  
 Right o'er a mount of newly-fallen stones,  
 The dusky-rafter'd many-cobwebb'd hall,  
 He found an ancient dame in dim bro-  
 cade;  
 And near her, like a blossom vermeil-  
 white,  
 That lightly breaks a faded flower-sheath,  
 Moved the fair Enid, all in faded silk,

Her daughter. In a moment thought  
 Geraint,  
 'Here by God's rood is the one maid for  
 me.'  
 But none spake word except the hoary  
 Earl:  
 'Enid, the good knight's horse stands in  
 the court;  
 Take him to stall, and give him corn, and  
 then  
 Go to the town and buy us flesh and  
 wine;  
 And we will make us merry as we may.  
 Our hoard is little, but our hearts are  
 great.'

He spake: the Prince, as Enid past  
 him, fain  
 To follow, strode a stride, but Yniol caught  
 His purple scarf, and held, and said, 'For-  
 bear!  
 Rest! the good house, tho' ruin'd, O my  
 son,  
 Endures not that her guest should serve  
 himself.'  
 And reverencing the custom of the house  
 Geraint, from utter courtesy, forbore.

So Enid took his charger to the stall;  
 And after went her way across the bridge,  
 And reach'd the town, and while the  
 Prince and Earl  
 Yet spoke together, came again with one,  
 A youth, that following with a costrel bore  
 The means of goodly welcome, flesh and  
 wine.  
 And Enid brought sweet cakes to make  
 them cheer,  
 And in her veil enfolded, manchet bread.  
 And then, because their hall must also  
 serve  
 For kitchen, boil'd the flesh, and spread  
 the board,  
 And stood behind, and waited on the  
 three.  
 And seeing her so sweet and serviceable,  
 Geraint had longing in him evermore  
 To stoop and kiss the tender little thumb,  
 That crost the trencher as she laid it down:  
 But after all had eaten, then Geraint,  
 For now the wine made summer in his  
 veins,  
 Let his eye rove in following, or rest

On Enid at her lowly handmaid-work,  
Now here, now there, about the dusky  
hall;

Then suddenly address the hoary Earl :

‘Fair Host and Earl, I pray your cour-  
tesy;

This sparrow-hawk, what is he? tell me  
of him.

His name? but no, good faith, I will not  
have it :

For if he be the knight whom late I saw  
Ride into that new fortress by your town,  
White from the mason’s hand, then have  
I sworn

From his own lips to have it—I am  
Geraint

Of Devon—for this morning when the  
Queen

Sent her own maiden to demand the  
name,

His dwarf, a vicious under-shapen thing,  
Struck at her with his whip, and she re-  
turn’d

Indignant to the Queen; and then I swore  
That I would track this caitiff to his hold,  
And fight and break his pride, and have  
it of him.

And all unarm’d I rode, and thought to  
find

Arms in your town, where all the men are  
mad;

They take the rustic murmur of their  
bourg

For the great wave that echoes round the  
world;

They would not hear me speak : but if ye  
know

Where I can light on arms, or if yourself  
Should have them, tell me, seeing I have  
sworn

That I will break his pride and learn his  
name,

Avenging this great insult done the  
Queen.’

Then cried Earl Yniol, ‘Art thou be  
indeed,

Geraint, a name far-sounded among men  
For noble deeds? and truly I, when first  
I saw you moving by me on the bridge,  
Felt ye were somewhat, yea, and by your  
state

And presence might have guess’d you one  
of those

That eat in Arthur’s hall at Camelot.

Nor speak I now from foolish flattery;

For this dear child hath often heard me  
praise

Your feats of arms, and often when I  
paused

Hath ask’d again, and ever loved to hear;

So grateful is the noise of noble deeds

To noble hearts who see but acts of  
wrong:

O never yet had woman such a pair

Of suitors as this maiden; first Limours,

A creature wholly given to brawls and  
wine,

Drunk even when he woo’d; and he he  
dead

I know not, but he past to the wild land.

The second was your foe, the sparrow-  
hawk,

My curse, my nephew—I will not let his  
name

Slip from my lips if I can help it—he,

When I that knew him fierce and turbu-  
lent

Refused her to him, then his pride awoke;

And since the proud man often is the  
mean,

He sow’d a slander in the common ear,

Affirming that his father left him gold,

And in my charge, which was not ren-  
der’d to him;

Bribed with large promises the men who  
served

About my person, the more easily

Because my means were somewhat broken  
into

Thro’ open doors and hospitality;

Raised my own town against me in the  
night

Before my Enid’s birthday, sack’d my  
house;

From mine own earldom foully ousted  
me;

Built that new fort to overawe my friends,  
For truly there are those who love me  
yet;

And keeps me in this ruinous castle here,  
Where doubtless he would put me soon  
to death,

But that his pride too much despises me :  
And I myself sometimes despise myself;

For I have let men be, and have their way;  
Am much too gentle, have not used my  
power:

Nor know I whether I be very base  
Or very manful, whether very wise  
Or very foolish; only this I know,  
That whatsoever evil happen to me,  
I seem to suffer nothing heart or limb,  
But can endure it all most patiently.'

'Well said, true heart,' replied Geraint,  
'but arms,  
That if the sparrow-hawk, this nephew,  
fight  
In next day's tourney I may break his  
pride.'

And Yniol answer'd, 'Arms, indeed, but  
old  
And rusty, old and rusty, Prince Geraint,  
Are mine, and therefore at thine asking,  
thine.

But in this tournament can no man tilt,  
Except the lady he loves best be there.  
Two forks are fixt into the meadow  
ground,

And over these is placed a silver wand,  
And over that a golden sparrow-hawk,  
The prize of beauty for the fairest there.  
And this, what knight soever be in field  
Lays claim to for the lady at his side,  
And tilts with my good nephew there-  
upon,

Who being apt at arms and big of bone  
Has ever won it for the lady with him,  
And toppling over all antagonism  
Has earn'd himself the name of sparrow-  
hawk.

But thou, that hast no lady, canst not  
fight.'

To whom Geraint with eyes all bright  
replied,

Leaning a little toward him, 'Thy leave!  
Let *me* lay lance in rest, O noble host,  
For this dear child, because I never saw,  
Tho' having seen all beauties of our time,  
Nor can see elsewhere, anything so fair.  
And if I fall her name will yet remain  
Untarnish'd as before; but if I live,  
So aid me Heaven when at mine utter-  
most,

As I will make her truly my true wife.'

Then, howsoever patient, Yniol's heart  
Danced in his bosom, seeing better days.  
And looking round he saw not Enid  
there,

(Who hearing her own name had stol'n  
away)

But that old dame, to whom full tenderly  
And fondling all her hand in his he said,  
'Mother, a maiden is a tender thing,  
And best by her that bore her under-  
stood.

Go thou to rest, but ere thou go to rest  
Tell her, and prove her heart toward the  
Prince.'

So spake the kindly-hearted Earl, and  
she  
With frequent smile and nod departing  
found,

Half disarray'd as to her rest, the girl;  
Whom first she kiss'd on either cheek,  
and then

On either shining shoulder laid a hand  
And kept her off and gazed upon her  
face,

And told her all their converse in the  
hall,

Proving her heart: but never light and  
shade

Cours'd one another more on open  
ground

Beneath a troubled heaven, than red and  
pale

Across the face of Enid hearing her;  
While slowly falling as a scale that falls,  
When weight is added only grain by  
grain,

Sank her sweet head upon her gentle  
breast;

Nor did she lift an eye nor speak a word,  
Rapt in the fear and in the wonder of it;  
So moving without answer to her rest

She found no rest, and ever fail'd to draw  
The quiet night into her blood, but lay  
Contemplating her own unworthiness;

And when the pale and bloodless east  
began

To quicken to the sun, arose, and raised  
Her mother too, and hand in hand they  
moved

Down to the meadow where the jousts  
were held,

And waited there for Yniol and Geraint.

And thither came the twain, and when  
Geraint  
Beheld her first in field, awaiting him,  
He felt, were she the prize of bodily  
force,  
Himself beyond the rest pushing could  
move  
The chair of Idris. Yniol's rusted arms  
Were on his princely person, but thro'  
these  
Princelike his bearing shone; and errant  
knights  
And ladies came, and by and by the town  
Flow'd in, and settling circled all the  
lists.  
And there they fixt the forks into the  
ground,  
And over these they placed the silver  
wand,  
And over that the golden sparrow-hawk.  
Then Yniol's nephew, after trumpet  
blown,  
Spake to the lady with him and pro-  
claim'd,  
'Advance and take, as fairest of the fair,  
What I these two years past have won  
for thee,  
The prize of beauty.' Loudly spake the  
Prince,  
'Forbear: there is a worthier,' and the  
knight  
With some surprise and thrice as much  
disdain  
Turn'd, and beheld the four, and all his  
face  
Glow'd like the heart of a great fire at  
Yule,  
So burnt he was with passion, crying  
out,  
'Do battle for it then,' no more; and  
thrice  
They clash'd together, and thrice they  
brake their spears.  
Then each, dishorsed and drawing, lash'd  
at each  
So often and with such blows, that all  
the crowd  
Wonder'd, and now and then from distant  
walls  
There came a clapping as of phantom  
hands.  
So twice they fought, and twice they  
breathed, and still

The dew of their great labour, and the  
blood  
Of their strong bodies, flowing, drain'd  
their force.  
But either's force was match'd till Yniol's  
cry,  
'Remember that great insult done the  
Queen,'  
Increased Geraint's, who heaved his  
blade aloft,  
And crack'd the helmet thro', and bit the  
bone,  
And fell'd him, and set foot upon his  
breast,  
And said, 'Thy name?' To whom the  
fallen man  
Made answer, groaning, 'Edyrn, son of  
Nudd!  
Ashamed am I that I should tell it thee.  
My pride is broken: men have seen my  
fall.'  
'Then, Edyrn, son of Nudd,' replied  
Geraint,  
'These two things shalt thou do, or else  
thou diest.  
First, thou thyself, with damsel and with  
dwarf,  
Shalt ride to Arthur's court, and coming  
there,  
Crave pardon for that insult done the  
Queen,  
And shalt abide her judgment on it;  
next,  
Thou shalt give back their earldom to  
thy kin.  
These two things shalt thou do, or thou  
shalt die.'  
And Edyrn answer'd, 'These things will  
I do,  
For I have never yet been overthrown,  
And thou hast overthrown me, and my  
pride  
Is broken down, for Enid sees my fall!'  
And rising up, he rode to Arthur's  
court,  
And there the Queen forgave him easily.  
And being young, he changed and came  
to loathe  
His crime of traitor, slowly drew him-  
self  
Bright from his old dark life, and fell at  
last  
In the great battle fighting for the King.

But when the third day from the hunting-morn  
 Made a low splendour in the world, and wings  
 Moved in her ivy, Enid, for she lay  
 With her fair head in the dim-yellow light,  
 Among the dancing shadows of the birds,  
 Woke and bethought her of her promise given  
 No later than last eve to Prince Geraint—  
 So bent he seem'd on going the third day,  
 He would not leave her, till her promise given—  
 To ride with him this morning to the court,  
 And there be made known to the stately Queen,  
 And there be wedded with all ceremony.  
 At this she cast her eyes upon her dress.  
 And thought it never yet had look'd so mean.  
 For as a leaf in mid-November is  
 To what it was in mid-October, seem'd  
 The dress that now she look'd on to the dress  
 She look'd on ere the coming of Geraint.  
 And still she look'd, and still the terror grew  
 Of that strange bright and dreadful thing,  
 a court,  
 All staring at her in her faded silk:  
 And softly to her own sweet heart she said:

'This noble prince who won our earldom back,  
 So splendid in his acts and his attire,  
 Sweet heaven, how much I shall discredit him!  
 Would he could tarry with us here awhile,  
 But being so beholden to the Prince,  
 It were but little grace in any of us,  
 Bent as he seem'd on going this third day,  
 To seek a second favour at his hands.  
 Yet if he could but tarry a day or two,  
 Myself would work eye dim, and finger lame,  
 Far liefer than so much discredit him.'

And Enid fell in longing for a dress  
 All branch'd and flower'd with gold, a costly gift  
 Of her good mother, given her on the night  
 Before her birthday, three sad years ago,  
 That night of fire, when Edyrn sack'd their house,  
 And scatter'd all they had to all the winds:  
 For while the mother show'd it, and the two  
 Were turning and admiring it, the work  
 To both appear'd so costly, rose a cry  
 That Edyrn's men were on them, and they fled  
 With little save the jewels they had on,  
 Which being sold and sold had bought them bread:  
 And Edyrn's men had caught them in their flight,  
 And placed them in this ruin; and she wish'd  
 The Prince had found her in her ancient home;  
 Then let her fancy flit across the past,  
 And roam the goodly places that she knew;  
 And last bethought her how she used to watch,  
 Near that old home, a pool of golden carp;  
 And one was patch'd and blurr'd and lustreless  
 Among his burnish'd brethren of the pool;  
 And half asleep she made comparison  
 Of that and these to her own faded self  
 And the gay court, and fell asleep again;  
 And dreamt herself was such a faded form  
 Among her burnish'd sisters of the pool;  
 But this was in the garden of a king;  
 And tho' she lay dark in the pool, she knew  
 That all was bright; that all about were birds  
 Of sunny plume in gilded trellis-work;  
 That all the turf was rich in plots that look'd  
 Each like a garnet or a turkis in it;  
 And lords and ladies of the high court went

In silver tissue talking things of state;  
 And children of the King in cloth of  
 gold  
 Glanced at the doors or gamboll'd down  
 the walks;  
 And while she thought 'They will not  
 see me,' came  
 A stately queen whose name was Guine-  
 vere,  
 And all the children in their cloth of  
 gold  
 Ran to her, crying, 'If we have fish at all  
 Let them be gold; and charge the  
 gardeners now  
 To pick the faded creature from the  
 pool,  
 And cast it on the mixen that it die.'  
 And therewithal one came and seized on  
 her,  
 And Enid started waking, with her heart  
 All overshadow'd by the foolish dream,  
 And lo! it was her mother grasping her  
 To get her well awake; and in her hand  
 A suit of bright apparel, which she laid  
 Flat on the couch, and spoke exultingly:

'See here, my child, how fresh the  
 colours look,  
 How fast they hold like colours of a  
 shell  
 That keeps the wear and polish of the  
 wave.  
 Why not? It never yet was worn, I  
 trow:  
 Look on it, child, and tell me if ye know  
 it.'

And Enid look'd, but all confused at  
 first,  
 Could scarce divide it from her foolish  
 dream:  
 Then suddenly she knew it and rejoiced,  
 And answer'd, 'Yea, I know it; your  
 good gift,  
 So sadly lost on that unhappy night;  
 Your own good gift!' 'Yea, surely,'  
 said the dame,  
 'And gladly given again this happy  
 morn.  
 For when the jousts were ended yester-  
 day,  
 Went Yniol thro' the town, and every-  
 where

He found the sack and plunder of our  
 house  
 All scatter'd thro' the houses of the  
 town;  
 And gave command that all which once  
 was ours  
 Should now be ours again: and yester-eve,  
 While ye were talking sweetly with your  
 Prince,  
 Came one with this and laid it in my  
 hand,  
 For love or fear, or seeking favour of us,  
 Because we have our earldom back  
 again.  
 And yester-eve I would not tell you of it,  
 But kept it for a sweet surprise at morn.  
 Yea, truly is it not a sweet surprise?  
 For I myself unwillingly have worn  
 My faded suit, as you, my child, have  
 yours,  
 And howsoever patient, Yniol his.  
 Ah, dear, he took me from a goodly  
 house,  
 With store of rich apparel, sumptuous  
 fare,  
 And page, and maid, and squire, and  
 seneschal,  
 And pastime both of hawk and hound,  
 and all  
 That appertains to noble maintenance.  
 Yea, and he brought me to a goodly  
 house;  
 But since our fortune swerved from sun  
 to shade,  
 And all thro' that young traitor, cruel  
 need  
 Constrain'd us, but a better time has  
 come;  
 So clothe yourself in this, that better fits  
 Our mended fortunes and a Prince's  
 bride:  
 For tho' ye won the prize of fairest fair,  
 And tho' I heard him call you fairest fair,  
 Let never maiden think, however fair,  
 She is not fairer in new clothes than old.  
 And should some great court-lady say,  
 the Prince  
 Hath pick'd a ragged-robin from the  
 hedge,  
 And like a madman brought her to the  
 court,  
 Then were ye shamed, and, worse, might  
 shame the Prince



To whom we are beholden; but I know,  
 When my dear child is set forth at her  
 best,  
 That neither court nor country, tho' they  
 sought  
 Thro' all the provinces like those of old  
 That lighted on Queen Esther, has her  
 match.'

Here ceased the kindly mother out of  
 breath;  
 And Enid listen'd brightening as she lay;  
 Then, as the white and glittering star of  
 morn  
 Parts from a bank of snow, and by and  
 by  
 Slips into golden cloud, the maiden rose,  
 And left her maiden couch, and robed  
 herself,  
 Help'd by the mother's careful hand and  
 eye,  
 Without a mirror, in the gorgeous gown;  
 Who, after, turn'd her daughter round,  
 and said,  
 She never yet had seen her half so fair;  
 And call'd her like that maiden in the  
 tale,  
 Whom Gwydion made by glamour out  
 of flowers,  
 And sweeter than the bride of Cassive-  
 laun,  
 Flur, for whose love the Roman Cæsar  
 first  
 Invaded Britain, 'But we beat him back,  
 As this great Prince invaded us, and we,  
 Not beat him back, but welcomed him  
 with joy.  
 And I can scarcely ride with you to  
 court,  
 For old am I, and rough the ways and  
 wild;  
 But Yniol goes, and I full oft shall dream  
 I see my princess as I see her now,  
 Clothed with my gift, and gay among  
 the gay.'

But while the women thus rejoiced,  
 Geraint  
 Woke where he slept in the high hall,  
 and call'd  
 For Enid, and when Yniol made report  
 Of that good mother making Enid gay  
 In such apparel as might well beseem

His princess, or indeed the stately Queen,  
 He answer'd: 'Earl, entreat her by my  
 love,  
 Albeit I give no reason but my wish,  
 That she ride with me in her faded silk.'  
 Yniol with that hard message went; it  
 fell  
 Like flaws in summer laying lusty corn:  
 For Enid, all abash'd she knew not why,  
 Dared not to glance at her good mother's  
 face,  
 But silently, in all obedience,  
 Her mother silent too, nor helping her,  
 Laid from her limbs the costly-broider'd  
 gift,  
 And robed them in her ancient suit  
 again,  
 And so descended. Never man rejoiced  
 More than Geraint to greet her thus  
 attired;  
 And glancing all at once as keenly at her  
 As careful robins eye the delver's toil,  
 Made her cheek burn and either eyelid  
 fall,  
 But rested with her sweet face satisfied;  
 Then seeing cloud upon the mother's  
 brow,  
 Her by both hands he caught, and  
 sweetly said,

'O my new mother, be not wroth or  
 grieved  
 At thy new son, for my petition to her.  
 When late I left Caerleon, our great  
 Queen,  
 In words whose echo lasts, they were so  
 sweet,  
 Made promise, that whatever bride I  
 brought,  
 Herself would clothe her like the sun  
 in Heaven.  
 Thereafter, when I reach'd this ruin'd  
 hall,  
 Beholding one so bright in dark estate,  
 I vow'd that could I gain her, our fair  
 Queen,  
 No hand but hers, should make your  
 Enid burst  
 Sunlike from cloud — and likewise  
 thought perhaps,  
 That service done so graciously would  
 bind  
 The two together; fain I would the two



Should love each other : how can Enid find  
A nobler friend? Another thought was  
mine;

I came among you here so suddenly,  
That tho' her gentle presence at the lists  
Might well have served for proof that I  
was loved,

I doubted whether daughter's tenderness,  
Or easy nature, might not let itself  
Be moulded by your wishes for her weal;  
Or whether some false sense in her own  
self

Of my contrasting brightness, overbore  
Her fancy dwelling in this dusky hall;  
And such a sense might make her long  
for court

And all its perilous glories: and I  
thought,

That could I somehow prove such force  
in her

Link'd with such love for me, that at  
a word

(No reason given her) she could cast  
aside

A splendour dear to women, new to her,  
And therefore dearer; or if not so new,  
Yet therefore tenfold dearer by the power  
Of intermitted usage; then I felt  
That I could rest, a rock in ebbs and  
flows,

Fixt on her faith. Now, therefore, I do  
rest,

A prophet certain of my prophecy,  
That never shadow of mistrust can cross  
Between us. Grant me pardon for my  
thoughts:

And for my strange petition I will make  
Amends hereafter by some gaudy-day,  
When your fair child shall wear your  
costly gift

Beside your own warm hearth, with, on  
her knees,

Who knows? another gift of the high  
God,

Which, maybe, shall have learn'd to lisp  
you thanks.'

He spoke: the mother smiled, but  
half in tears,

Then brought a mantle down and wrapt  
her in it,

And claspt and kiss'd her, and they rode  
away.

Now thrice that morning Guinevere  
had climb'd

The giant tower, from whose high crest,  
they say,

Men saw the goodly hills of Somerset,  
And white sails flying on the yellow sea;  
But not to goodly hill or yellow sea

Look'd the fair Queen, but up the vale  
of Usk,

By the flat meadow, till she saw them  
come;

And then descending met them at the  
gates,

Embraced her with all welcome as a  
friend,

And did her honour as the Prince's bride,  
And clothed her for her bridals like the  
sun;

And all that week was old Caerleon gay,  
For by the hands of Dubric, the high  
saint,

They twain were wedded with all cere-  
mony.

And this was on the last year's Whit-  
suntide.

But Enid ever kept the faded silk,  
Remembering how first he came on her,  
Drest in that dress, and how he loved  
her in it,

And all her foolish fears about the dress,  
And all his journey toward her, as him-  
self

Had told her, and their coming to the  
court.

And now this morning when he said  
to her,

'Put on your worst and meanest dress,'  
she found

And took it, and array'd herself therein.

#### GERAINT AND ENID.

O PURBLIND race of miserable men,  
How many among us at this very hour  
Do forge a life-long trouble for ourselves,  
By taking true for false, or false for true;  
Here, thro' the feeble twilight of this  
world

Groping, how many, until we pass and  
reach

That other, where we see as we are seen!

So fared it with Geraint, who issuing  
 forth  
 That morning, when they both had got  
 to horse,  
 Perhaps because he loved her passion-  
 ately,  
 And felt that tempest brooding round  
 his heart,  
 Which, if he spoke at all, would break  
 perforce  
 Upon a head so dear in thunder, said:  
 'Not at my side. I charge thee ride  
 before,  
 Ever a good way on before; and this  
 I charge thee, on thy duty as a wife,  
 Whatever happens, not to speak to me,  
 No, not a word!' and Enid was aghast;  
 And forth they rode, but scarce three  
 paces on,  
 When crying out, 'Effeminate as I am,  
 I will not fight my way with gilded arms,  
 All shall be iron;' he loosed a mighty  
 purse,  
 Hung at his belt, and hurl'd it toward  
 the squire.  
 So the last sight that Enid had of home  
 Was all the marble threshold flashing,  
 strown  
 With gold and scatter'd coinage, and  
 the squire  
 Chafing his shoulder: then he cried  
 again,  
 'To the wilds!' and Enid leading down  
 the tracks  
 Thro' which he bade her lead him on,  
 they past  
 The marches, and by bandit-haunted  
 holds,  
 Gray swamps and pools, waste places of  
 the hern,  
 And wildernesses, perilous paths, they  
 rode:  
 Round was their pace at first, but slack-  
 en'd soon:  
 A stranger meeting them had surely  
 thought  
 They rode so slowly and they look'd so  
 pale,  
 That each had suffer'd some exceeding  
 wrong.  
 For he was ever saying to himself,  
 'O I that wasted time to tend upon her,  
 To compass her with sweet observances,

To dress her beautifully and keep her  
 true'—  
 And there he broke the sentence in his  
 heart  
 Abruptly, as a man upon his tongue  
 May break it, when his passion masters  
 him.  
 And she was ever praying the sweet  
 heavens  
 To save her dear lord whole from any  
 wound.  
 And ever in her mind she cast about  
 For that unnoticed failing in herself,  
 Which made him look so cloudy and so  
 cold;  
 Till the great plover's human whistle  
 amazed  
 Her heart, and glancing round the waste  
 she fear'd  
 In every wavering brake an ambus-  
 cade.  
 Then thought again, 'If there be such in  
 me,  
 I might amend it by the grace of  
 Heaven,  
 If he would only speak and tell me of it.'

But when the fourth part of the day  
 was gone,  
 Then Enid was aware of three tall  
 knights  
 On horseback, wholly arm'd, behind a  
 rock  
 In shadow, waiting for them, caitiffs all;  
 And heard one crying to his fellow,  
 'Look,  
 Here comes a laggard hanging down his  
 head,  
 Who seems no bolder than a beaten  
 hound;  
 Come, we will slay him and will have  
 his horse  
 And armour, and his damsel shall be  
 ours.'

Then Enid ponder'd in her heart, and  
 said:  
 'I will go back a little to my lord,  
 And I will tell him all their caitiff talk;  
 For, be he wroth even to slaying me,  
 Far liefer by his dear hand had I die,  
 Than that my lord should suffer loss or  
 shame.'

Then she went back some paces of  
return,  
Met his full frown timidly firm, and said;  
'My lord, I saw three bandits by the  
rock  
Waiting to fall on you, and heard them  
boast  
That they would slay you, and possess  
your horse  
And armour, and your damsel should be  
theirs.'

He made a wrathful answer: 'Did I  
wish  
Your warning or your silence? one com-  
mand  
I laid upon you, not to speak to me,  
And thus ye keep it! Well then, look  
—for now,  
Whether ye wish me victory or defeat,  
Long for my life, or hunger for my  
death,  
Yourself shall see my vigour is not lost.'

Then Enid waited, pale and sorrowful,  
And down upon him bare the bandit  
three.  
And at the midmost charging, Prince  
Geraint  
Drave the long spear a cubit thro' his  
breast  
And out beyond; and then against his  
brace  
Of comrades, each of whom had broken  
on him  
A lance that splinter'd like an icicle,  
Swung from his brand a windy buffet  
out  
Once, twice, to right, to left, and stunn'd  
the twain  
Or slew them, and dismounting like a  
man  
That skins the wild beast after slaying  
him,  
Strippt from the three dead wolves of  
woman born  
The three gay suits of armour which they  
wore,  
And let the bodies lie, but bound the  
suits  
Of armour on their horses, each on  
each,  
And tied the bridle-reins of all the three

Together, and said to her, 'Drive them  
on  
Before you;' and she drove them thro'  
the waste.

He follow'd nearer: ruth began to  
work  
Against his anger in him, while he  
watch'd  
The being he loved best in all the world,  
With difficulty in mild obedience  
Driving them on: he fain had spoken to  
her,  
And loosed in words of sudden fire the  
wrath  
And smoulder'd wrong that burnt him  
all within;  
But evermore it seem'd an easier thing  
At once without remorse to strike her  
dead,  
Than to cry 'Halt,' and to her own  
bright face  
Accuse her of the least immodesty:  
And thus tongue-tied, it made him wroth  
the more  
That she *could* speak whom his own ear  
had heard  
Call herself false: and suffering thus he  
made  
Minutes an age: but in scarce longer time  
Than at Caerleon the full-tided Usk,  
Before he turn to fall seaward again,  
Pauses, did Enid, keeping watch, behold  
In the first shallow shade of a deep wood,  
Before a gloom of stubborn-shafted oaks,  
Three other horsemen waiting, wholly  
arm'd,  
Whereof one seem'd far larger than her  
lord,  
And shook her pulses, crying, 'Look, a  
prize!  
Three horses and three goodly suits of  
arms,  
And all in charge of whom? a girl: set  
on.'  
'Nay,' said the second, 'yonder comes a  
knight.'  
The third, 'A craven; how he hangs his  
head.'  
The giant answer'd merrily, 'Yea, but  
one?  
Wait here, and when he passes fall upon  
him.'

And Enid ponder'd in her heart and said,  
 'I will abide the coming of my lord,  
 And I will tell him all their villainy.  
 My lord is weary with the fight before,  
 And they will fall upon him unawares;  
 I needs must disobey him for his good;  
 How should I dare obey him to his harm?  
 Needs must I speak, and tho' he kill me for it,  
 I save a life dearer to me than mine.'

And she abode his coming, and said to him  
 With timid firmness, 'Have I leave to speak?'  
 He said, 'Ye take it, speaking,' and she spoke.

'There lurk three villains yonder in the wood,  
 And each of them is wholly arm'd, and one  
 Is larger-limb'd than you are, and they say  
 That they will fall upon you while ye pass.'

To which he flung a wrathful answer back:  
 'And if there were an hundred in the wood,  
 And every man were larger-limb'd than I,  
 And all at once should sally out upon me,  
 I swear it would not ruffle me so much  
 As you that not obey me. Stand aside,  
 And if I fall, cleave to the better man.'

And Enid stood aside to wait the event,  
 Not dare to watch the combat, only breathe  
 Short fits of prayer, at every stroke a breath.  
 And he, she dreaded most, bare down upon him.  
 Aim'd at the helm, his lance err'd; but Geraint's,  
 A little in the late encounter strain'd,  
 Struck thro' the bulky bandit's corselet home,  
 And then brake short, and down his enemy roll'd,

And there lay still; as he that tells the tale  
 Saw once a great piece of a promontory,  
 That had a sapling growing on it, slide  
 From the long shore-cliff's windy walls to the beach,  
 And there lie still, and yet the sapling grew:  
 So lay the man transfixt. His craven pair  
 Of comrades making slower at the Prince,  
 When now they saw their bulwark fallen, stood;  
 On whom the victor, to confound them more,  
 Spurr'd with his terrible war-cry; for as one,  
 That listens near a torrent mountain-brook,  
 All thro' the crash of the near cataract hears  
 The drumming thunder of the huger fall  
 At distance, were the soldiers wont to hear  
 His voice in battle, and be kindled by it,  
 And foemen scared, like that false pair who turn'd  
 Flying, but, overtaken, died the death  
 Themselves had wrought on many an innocent.

Thereon Geraint, dismounting, pick'd the lance  
 That pleased him best, and drew from those dead wolves  
 Their three gay suits of armour, each from each,  
 And bound them on their horses, each on each,  
 And tied the bridle-reins of all the three  
 Together, and said to her, 'Drive them on  
 Before you,' and she drove them thro' the wood.

He follow'd nearer still: the pain she had  
 To keep them in the wild ways of the wood,  
 Two sets of three laden with jingling arms,  
 Together, served a little to disedge  
 The sharpness of that pain about her heart:

And they themselves, like creatures gently  
born  
But into bad hands fall'n, and now so long  
By bandits groom'd, prick'd their light  
ears, and felt  
Her low firm voice and tender government.

So thro' the green gloom of the wood  
they past,  
And issuing under open heavens beheld  
A little town with towers, upon a rock,  
And close beneath, a meadow gemlike  
chased

In the brown wild, and mowers mowing  
in it:

And down a rocky pathway from the place  
There came a fair-hair'd youth, that in his  
hand

Bare victual for the mowers: and Geraint  
Had ruth again on Enid looking pale:  
Then, moving downward to the meadow  
ground,

He, when the fair-hair'd youth came by  
him, said,

'Friend, let her eat; the damsel is so  
faint.'

'Yea, willingly,' replied the youth; 'and  
thou,

My lord, eat also, tho' the fare is coarse,  
And only meet for mowers;' then set  
down

His basket, and dismounting on the sward  
They let the horses graze, and ate them-  
selves.

And Enid took a little delicately,  
Less having stomach for it than desire  
To close with her lord's pleasure; but  
Geraint

Ate all the mowers' victual unawares,  
And when he found all empty, was  
amazed;

And 'Boy,' said he, 'I have eaten all,  
but take

A horse and arms for guerdon; choose  
the best.'

He, reddening in extremity of delight,  
'My lord, you overpay me fifty-fold.'

'Ye will be all the wealthier,' cried the  
Prince.

'I take it as free gift, then,' said the boy,  
'Not guerdon; for myself can easily,  
While your good damsel rests, return,  
and fetch

Fresh victual for these mowers of our  
Earl;

For these are his, and all the field is his,  
And I myself am his; and I will tell him  
How great a man thou art: he loves to  
know

When men of mark are in his territory:  
And he will have thee to his palace here,  
And serve thee costlier than with mowers'  
fare.'

Then said Geraint, 'I wish no better  
fare:

I never ate with angrier appetite  
Than when I left your mowers dinnerless.  
And into no Earl's palace will I go.

I know, God knows, too much of palaces!  
And if he want me, let him come to me.

But hire us some fair chamber for the  
night,

And stalling for the horses, and return  
With victual for these men, and let us  
know.'

'Yea, my kind lord,' said the glad  
youth, and went,

Held his head high, and thought himself  
a knight,

And up the rocky pathway disappear'd,  
Leading the horse, and they were left  
alone.

But when the Prince had brought his  
errant eyes

Home from the rock, sideways he let  
them glance

At Enid, where she droopt: his own false  
doom,

That shadow of mistrust should never cross  
Betwixt them, came upon him, and he  
sigh'd;

Then with another humorous ruth re-  
mark'd

The lusty mowers labouring dinnerless,  
And watch'd the sun blaze on the turning  
scythe,

And after nodded sleepily in the heat.  
But she, remembering her old ruin'd hall,

And all the windy clamour of the daws  
About her hollow turret, pluck'd the  
grass

There growing longest by the meadow's  
edge,

And into many a listless annulet,  
 Now over, now beneath her marriage  
 ring,  
 Wove and unweave it, till the boy return'd  
 And told them of a chamber, and they  
 went;  
 Where, after saying to her, 'If ye will,  
 Call for the woman of the house,' to  
 which  
 She answer'd, 'Thanks, my lord;' the  
 two remain'd  
 Apart by all the chamber's width, and  
 mute  
 As creatures voiceless thro' the fault of  
 birth,  
 Or two wild men supporters of a shield,  
 Painted, who stare at open space, nor  
 glance  
 The one at other, parted by the shield.

On a sudden, many a voice along the  
 street,  
 And heel against the pavement echoing,  
 burst  
 Their drowse; and either started while  
 the door,  
 Push'd from without, drove backward to  
 the wall,  
 And midmost of a rout of roisterers,  
 Femininely fair and dissolutely pale,  
 Her suitor in old years before Geraint,  
 Enter'd, the wild lord of the place,  
 Limours.  
 He moving up with pliant courtliness,  
 Greeted Geraint full face, but stealthily,  
 In the mid-warmth of welcome and graspt  
 hand,  
 Found Enid with the corner of his eye,  
 And knew her sitting sad and solitary.  
 Then cried Geraint for wine and goodly  
 cheer  
 To feed the sudden guest, and sumptuously  
 According to his fashion, bade the host  
 Call in what men soever were his friends,  
 And feast with these in honour of their  
 Earl;  
 'And care not for the cost; the cost is  
 mine.'

And wine and food were brought, and  
 Earl Limours  
 Drank till he jested with all ease, and told

Free tales, and took the word and play'd  
 upon it,  
 And made it of two colours; for his talk,  
 When wine and free companions kindled  
 him,  
 Was wont to glance and sparkle like a gem  
 Of fifty facets; thus he moved the Prince  
 To laughter and his comrades to applause.  
 Then, when the Prince was merry, ask'd  
 Limours,  
 'Your leave, my lord, to cross the room,  
 and speak  
 To your good damsel there who sits apart,  
 And seems so lonely?' 'My free leave,'  
 he said;  
 'Get her to speak: she doth not speak to  
 me.'  
 Then rose Limours, and looking at his  
 feet,  
 Like him who tries the bridge he fears  
 may fail,  
 Crost and came near, lifted adoring eyes,  
 Bow'd at her side and utter'd whisper-  
 ingly:

'Enid, the pilot star of my lone life,  
 Enid, my early and my only love,  
 Enid, the loss of whom hath turn'd me  
 wild—  
 What chance is this? how is it I see you  
 here?  
 Ye are in my power at last, are in my  
 power.  
 Yet fear me not: I call mine own self  
 wild,  
 But keep a touch of sweet civility  
 Here in the heart of waste and wilderness.  
 I thought, but that your father came  
 between,  
 In former days you saw me favourably.  
 And if it were so do not keep it back:  
 Make me a little happier: let me know it:  
 Owe you me nothing for a life half-lost?  
 Yea, yea, the whole dear debt of all you  
 are.  
 And, Enid, you and he, I see with joy,  
 Ye sit apart, you do not speak to him,  
 You come with no attendance, page or  
 maid,  
 To serve you—doth he love you as of old?  
 For, call it lovers' quarrels, yet I know  
 Tho' men may bicker with the things  
 they love,



They would not make them laughable in  
all eyes,  
Not while they loved them; and your  
wretched dress,

A wretched insult on you, dumbly speaks  
Your story, that this man loves you no  
more.

Your beauty is no beauty to him now:  
A common chance — right well I know  
it — pall'd —

For I know men: nor will ye win him  
back,

For the man's love once gone never  
returns.

But here is one who loves you as of old;  
With more exceeding passion than of old:  
Good, speak the word: my followers ring  
him round:

He sits unarm'd; I hold a finger up;  
They understand: nay; I do not mean  
blood:

Nor need ye look so scared at what I  
say:

My malice is no deeper than a moat,  
No stronger than a wall: there is the  
keep;

He shall not cross us more; speak but  
the word:

Or speak it not; but then by Him that  
made me

The one true lover whom you ever own'd,  
I will make use of all the power I have.

O pardon me! the madness of that hour,  
When first I parted from thee, moves me  
yet.'

At this the tender sound of his own  
voice

And sweet self-pity, or the fancy of it,  
Made his eye moist; but Enid fear'd his  
eyes,

Moist as they were, wine-heated from the  
feast;

And answer'd with such craft as women  
use,

Guilty or guiltless, to stave off a chance  
That breaks upon them perilously, and  
said:

'Earl, if you love me as in former  
years,

And do not practise on me, come with  
morn,

And snatch me from him as by violence;  
Leave me to-night: I am weary to the  
death.'

Low at leave-taking, with his brandish'd  
plume

Brushing his instep, bow'd the all-amorous  
Earl,

And the stout Prince bade him a loud  
good-night.

He moving homeward babbled to his men,  
How Enid never loved a man but him,  
Nor cared a broken egg-shell for her lord.

But Enid left alone with Prince Geraint,  
Debating his command of silence given,  
And that she now perforce must violate it,  
Held commune with herself, and while  
she held

He fell asleep, and Enid had no heart  
To wake him, but hung o'er him, wholly  
pleas'd

To find him yet unwounded after fight,  
And hear him breathing low and equally.  
Anon she rose, and stepping lightly,  
heap'd

The pieces of his armour in one place,  
All to be there against a sudden need;  
Then dozed awhile herself, but overtoil'd  
By that day's grief and travel, evermore  
Seem'd catching at a rootless thorn, and  
then

Went slipping down horrible precipices.  
And strongly striking out her limbs  
awoke;

Then thought she heard the wild Earl at  
the door,

With all his rout of random followers,  
Sound on a dreadful trumpet, summoning  
her;

Which was the red cock shouting to the  
light,

As the gray dawn stole o'er the dewy  
world,

And glimmer'd on his armour in the room.  
And once again she rose to look at it,  
But touch'd it unawares: jangling, the  
casque

Fell, and he started up and stared at her.  
Then breaking his command of silence  
given,

She told him all that Earl Limours had  
said,



Except the passage that he loved her not;  
Nor left untold the craft herself had used;  
But ended with apology so sweet,  
Low-spoken, and of so few words, and  
seem'd

So justified by that necessity,  
That tho' he thought 'was it for him she  
wept

In Devon?' he but gave a wrathful groan,  
Saying, 'Your sweet faces make good  
fellows fools

And traitors. Call the host and bid him  
bring

Charger and palfrey.' So she glided out  
Among the heavy breathings of the  
house,

And like a household Spirit at the walls  
Beat, till she woke the sleepers, and  
return'd:

Then tending her rough lord, tho' all  
unask'd,

In silence, did him service as a squire;  
Till issuing arm'd he found the host and  
cried,

'Thy reckoning, friend?' and ere he  
learnt it, 'Take

Five horses and their armours;' and the  
host

Suddenly honest, answer'd in amaze,  
'My lord, I scarce have spent the worth  
of one!'

'Ye will be all the wealthier,' said the  
Prince,

And then to Enid, 'Forward! and to-day  
I charge you, Enid, more especially,  
What thing soever ye may hear, or see,  
Or fancy (tho' I count it of small use  
To charge you) that ye speak not but  
obey.'

And Enid answer'd, 'Yea, my lord,  
I know

Your wish, and would obey; but riding  
first,

I hear the violent threats you do not hear,  
I see the danger which you cannot see:  
Then not to give you warning, that seems  
hard;

Almost beyond me: yet I would obey.'

'Yea so,' said he, 'do it: be not too  
wise;

Seeing that ye are wedded to a man,

Not all mismated with a yawning clown,  
But one with arms to guard his head and  
yours,

With eyes to find you out however far,  
And ears to hear you even in his dreams.'

With that he turn'd and look'd as  
keenly at her

As careful robins eye the delver's toil;  
And that within her, which a wanton fool,  
Or hasty judger would have call'd her  
guilt,

Made her cheek burn and either eyelid fall.  
And Geraint look'd and was not satisfied.

Then forward by a way which, beaten  
broad,

Led from the territory of false Limours  
To the waste earldom of another earl,  
Doorm, whom his shaking vassals call'd  
the Bull,

Went Enid with her sullen follower on.  
Once she look'd back, and when she saw  
him ride

More near by many a rood than yester-  
morn,

It wellnigh made her cheerful; till  
Geraint

Waving an angry hand as who should say  
'Ye watch me,' sadden'd all her heart  
again.

But while the sun yet beat a dewy blade,  
The sound of many a heavily-galloping  
hoof

Smote on her ear, and turning round she  
saw

Dust, and the points of lances bicker in it.  
Then not to disobey her lord's behest,  
And yet to give him warning, for he rode  
As if he heard not, moving back she held  
Her finger up, and pointed to the dust.  
At which the warrior in his obstinacy,  
Because she kept the letter of his word,  
Was in a manner pleased, and turning,  
stood.

And in the moment after, wild Limours,  
Borne on a black horse, like a thunder-  
cloud

Whose skirts are loosen'd by the breaking  
storm,

Half ridden off with by the thing he  
rode,

And all in passion uttering a dry shriek,

Dash'd on Geraint, who closed with him,  
and bore  
Down by the length of lance and arm  
beyond

The crupper, and so left him stunn'd or  
dead,

And overthrew the next that follow'd him,  
And blindly rush'd on all the rout behind.  
But at the flash and motion of the man  
They vanish'd panic-stricken, like a shoal  
Of darting fish, that on a summer morn  
Adown the crystal dykes at Camelot  
Come slipping o'er their shadows on the  
sand,

But if a man who stands upon the brink  
But lift a shining hand against the sun,  
There is not left the twinkle of a fin  
Betwixt the cressy islets white in flower;  
So, scared but at the motion of the man,  
Fled all the boon companions of the Earl,  
And left him lying in the public way;  
So vanish friendships only made in wine.

Then like a stormy sunlight smiled  
Geraint,  
Who saw the chargers of the two that fell  
Start from their fallen lords, and wildly  
fly,  
Mixt with the flyers. 'Horse and man,'  
he said,  
'All of one mind and all right-honest  
friends!

Not a hoof left: and I methinks till now  
Was honest — paid with horses and with  
arms;

I cannot steal or plunder, no nor beg:  
And so what say ye, shall we strip him  
there

Your lover? has your palfrey heart enough  
To bear his armour? shall we fast, or  
dine?

No? — then do thou, being right honest,  
pray

That we may meet the horsemen of Earl  
Doorm,

I too would still be honest.' Thus he  
said:

And sadly gazing on her bridle-reins,  
And answering not one word, she led the  
way.

But as a man to whom a dreadful loss  
Falls in a far land and he knows it not,

But coming back he learns it, and the loss  
So pains him that he sickens nigh to  
death;

So fared it with Geraint, who being prick'd  
In combat with the follower of Limours,  
Bled underneath his armour secretly,  
And so rode on, nor told his gentle wife  
What ail'd him, hardly knowing it himself,  
Till his eye darken'd and his helmet  
wagg'd;

And at a sudden swerving of the road,  
Tho' happily down on a bank of grass,  
The Prince, without a word, from his  
horse fell.

And Enid heard the clashing of his fall,  
Suddenly came, and at his side all pale  
Dismounting, loosed the fastenings of his  
arms,

Nor let her true hand falter, nor blue eye  
Moisten, till she had lighted on his wound,  
And tearing off her veil of faded silk  
Had bared her forehead to the blistering  
sun,

And swathed the hurt that drain'd her  
dear lord's life.

Then after all was done that hand could do,  
She rested, and her desolation came  
Upon her, and she wept beside the way.

And many past, but none regarded her,  
For in that realm of lawless turbulence,  
A woman weeping for her murder'd mate  
Was cared as much for as a summer  
shower:

One took him for a victim of Earl Doorm,  
Nor dared to waste a perilous pity on him:  
Another hurrying past, a man-at-arms,  
Rode on a mission to the bandit Earl;  
Half whistling and half singing a coarse  
song,

He drove the dust against her veiless  
eyes:

Another, flying from the wrath of Doorm  
Before an ever-fancied arrow, made  
The long way smoke beneath him in his  
fear;

At which her palfrey whinnying lifted  
heel,

And scourd into the coppices and was  
lost,

While the great charger stood, grieved  
like a man.

But at the point of noon the huge Earl  
Doorm,  
Broad-faced with under-fringe of russet  
beard,  
Bound on a foray, rolling eyes of prey,  
Came riding with a hundred lances up;  
But ere he came, like one that hails a ship,  
Cried out with a big voice, 'What, is he  
dead?'  
'No, no, not dead!' she answer'd in all  
haste.  
'Would some of your kind people take  
him up,  
And bear him hence out of this cruel sun?  
Most sure am I, quite sure, he is not dead.'

Then said Earl Doorm: 'Well, if he  
be not dead,  
Why wail ye for him thus? ye seem a child.  
And be he dead, I count you for a fool;  
Your wailing will not quicken him: dead  
or not,  
Ye mar a comely face with idiot tears.  
Yet, since the face *is* comely — some of  
you,  
Here, take him up, and bear him to our  
hall:  
And if he live, we will have him of our  
band;  
And if he die, why earth has earth enough  
To hide him. See ye take the charger too,  
A noble one.'

He spake, and past away,  
But left two brawny spearmen, who  
advanced,  
Each growling like a dog, when his good  
bone  
Seems to be pluck'd at by the village boys  
Who love to vex him eating, and he fears  
To lose his bone, and lays his foot upon it,  
Gnawing and growling: so the ruffians  
growl'd,  
Fearing to lose, and all for a dead man,  
Their chance of booty from the morning's  
raid,  
Yet raised and laid him on a litter-bier,  
Such as they brought upon their forays  
out  
For those that might be wounded; laid  
him on it  
All in the hollow of his shield, and took  
And bore him to the naked hall of Doorm  
(His gentle charger following him unled),

And cast him and the bier in which he  
lay  
Down on an oaken settle in the hall,  
And then departed, hot in haste to join  
Their luckier mates, but growling as  
before,  
And cursing their lost time, and the dead  
man,  
And their own Earl, and their own souls,  
and her.  
They might as well have blest her: she  
was deaf  
To blessing or to cursing save from one.

So for long hours sat Enid by her lord,  
There in the naked hall, propping his  
head,  
And chafing his pale hands, and calling  
to him.  
Till at the last he waken'd from his swoon,  
And found his own dear bride propping  
his head,  
And chafing his faint hands, and calling  
to him;  
And felt the warm tears falling on his face;  
And said to his own heart, 'She weeps for  
me.'  
And yet lay still, and feign'd himself as  
dead,  
That he might prove her to the uttermost,  
And say to his own heart, 'She weeps for  
me.'

But in the falling afternoon return'd  
The huge Earl Doorm with plunder to  
the hall.  
His lusty spearmen follow'd him with  
noise:  
Each hurling down a heap of things that  
rang  
Against the pavement, cast his lance aside,  
And doff'd his helm: and then there  
flutter'd in,  
Half-bold, half-frighted, with dilated eyes,  
A tribe of women, dress'd in many hues,  
And mingled with the spearmen: and  
Earl Doorm  
Struck with a knife's haft hard against  
the board,  
And call'd for flesh and wine to feed his  
spears.  
And men brought in whole hogs and  
quarter beeves,

And all the hall was dim with steam of  
flesh :

And none spake word, but all sat down  
at once,

And ate with tumult in the naked hall,  
Feeding like horses when you hear them  
feed;

Till Enid shrank far back into herself,  
To shun the wild ways of the lawless tribe.  
But when Earl Doorm had eaten all he  
would,

He roll'd his eyes about the hall, and  
found

A damsel drooping in a corner of it.  
Then he remember'd her, and how she  
wept;

And out of her there came a power upon  
him;

And rising on the sudden he said, 'Eat!  
I never yet beheld a thing so pale.

God's curse, it makes me mad to see you  
weep.

Eat! Look yourself. Good luck had  
your good man,

For were I dead who is it would weep for  
me?

Sweet lady, never since I first drew breath  
Have I beheld a lily like yourself.

And so there lived some colour in your  
cheek,

There is not one among my gentlewomen  
Were fit to wear your slipper for a glove.  
But listen to me, and by me be ruled,  
And I will do the thing I have not done,  
For ye shall share my earldom with me,  
girl,

And we will live like two birds in one  
nest,

And I will fetch you forage from all fields,  
For I compel all creatures to my will.'

He spoke: the brawny spearman let  
his cheek

Bulge with the unswallow'd piece, and  
turning stared;

While some, whose souls the old serpent  
long had drawn

Down, as the worm draws in the wither'd  
leaf

And makes it earth, hiss'd each at other's  
ear

What shall not be recorded — women  
they,

Women, or what had been those gracious  
things,

But now desired the humbling of their  
best,

Yea, would have help'd him to it: and  
all at once

They hated her, who took no thought of  
them,

But answer'd in low voice, her meek head  
yet

Drooping, 'I pray you of your courtesy,  
He being as he is, to let me be.'

She spake so low he hardly heard her  
speak,

But like a mighty patron, satisfied  
With what himself had done so graciously,  
Assumed that she had thank'd him, add-  
ing, 'Yea,

Eat and be glad, for I account you mine.'

She answer'd meekly, 'How should I  
be glad

Henceforth in all the world at anything,  
Until my lord arise and look upon me?'

Here the huge Earl cried out upon her  
talk,

As all but empty heart and weariness  
And sickly nothing; suddenly seized on  
her,

And bare her by main violence to the  
board,

And thrust the dish before her, crying,  
'Eat.'

'No, no,' said Enid, vext, 'I will not eat  
Till yonder man upon the bier arise,

And eat with me.' 'Drink, then,' he  
answer'd. 'Here!'

(And fill'd a horn with wine and held it  
to her,)

'Lo! I, myself, when flush'd with fight,  
or hot,

God's curse, with anger — often I myself,  
Before I well have drunken, scarce can  
eat:

Drink therefore and the wine will change  
your will.'

'Not so,' she cried, 'by Heaven, I will  
not drink

Till my dear lord arise and bid me do it,

And drink with me; and if he rise no  
more,  
I will not look at wine until I die.'

At this he turn'd all red and paced his  
hall,  
Now gnaw'd his under, now his upper  
lip,  
And coming up close to her, said at last:  
'Girl, for I see ye scorn my courtesies,  
Take warning: yonder man is surely  
dead;  
And I compel all creatures to my will.  
Not eat nor drink? And wherefore wail  
for one,  
Who put your beauty to this flout and  
scorn  
By dressing it in rags? Amazed am I,  
Beholding how ye butt against my wish,  
That I forbear you thus: cross me no  
more.  
At least put off to please me this poor  
gown,  
This silken rag, this beggar-woman's  
weed:  
I love that beauty should go beautifully:  
For see ye not my gentlewomen here,  
How gay, how suited to the house of one  
Who loves that beauty should go beauti-  
fully?  
Rise therefore; robe yourself in this:  
obey.'

He spoke, and one among his gentle-  
women  
Display'd a splendid silk of foreign loom,  
Where like a shoaling sea the lovely  
blue  
Play'd into green, and thicker down the  
front  
With jewels than the sward with drops of  
dew,  
When all night long a cloud clings to the  
hill,  
And with the dawn ascending lets the day  
Strike where it clung: so thickly shone  
the gems.

But Enid answer'd, harder to be moved  
Than hardest tyrants in their day of power,  
With life-long injuries burning unavenged,  
And now their hour has come; and  
Enid said:

'In this poor gown my dear lord found  
me first,  
And loved me serving in my father's hall:  
In this poor gown I rode with him to  
court,  
And there the Queen array'd me like the  
sun:  
In this poor gown he bade me clothe  
myself,  
When now we rode upon this fatal quest  
Of honour, where no honour can be  
gain'd:  
And this poor gown I will not cast aside  
Until himself arise a living man,  
And bid me cast it. I have griefs enough:  
Pray you be gentle, pray you let me be:  
I never loved, can never love but him:  
Yea, God, I pray you of your gentleness,  
He being as he is, to let me be.'

Then strode the brute Earl up and  
down his hall,  
And took his russet beard between his  
teeth;  
Last, coming up quite close, and in his  
mood  
Crying, 'I count it of no more avail,  
Dame, to be gentle than ungentle with  
you;  
Take my salute,' unknighly with flat hand,  
However lightly, smote her on the cheek.

Then Enid, in her utter helplessness,  
And since she thought, 'He had not  
dared to do it,  
Except he surely knew my lord was dead,'  
Sent forth a sudden sharp and bitter cry,  
As of a wild thing taken in the trap,  
Which sees the trapper coming thro' the  
wood.

This heard Geraint, and grasping at  
his sword  
(It lay beside him in the hollow shield),  
Made but a single bound, and with a  
sweep of it  
Shore thro' the swarthy neck, and like a  
ball  
The russet-bearded head roll'd on the  
floor.  
So died Earl Doorm by him he counted  
dead.  
And all the men and women in the hall

Rose when they saw the dead man rise,  
and fled  
Yelling as from a spectre, and the two  
Were left alone together, and he said :

‘Enid, I have used you worse than  
that dead man;  
Done you more wrong: we both have  
undergone  
That trouble which has left me thrice  
your own :  
Henceforward I will rather die than doubt.  
And here I lay this penance on myself,  
Not, tho’ mine own ears heard you  
yesternorn—  
You thought me sleeping, but I heard  
you say,  
I heard you say, that you were no true  
wife :  
I swear I will not ask your meaning in it :  
I do believe yourself against yourself,  
And will henceforward rather die than  
doubt.’

And Enid could not say one tender  
word,  
She felt so blunt and stupid at the heart :  
She only pray’d him, ‘Fly, they will  
return  
And slay you; fly, your charger is with-  
out,  
My palfrey lost.’ ‘Then, Enid, shall you  
ride  
Behind me.’ ‘Yea,’ said Enid, ‘let us go.’  
And moving out they found the stately  
horse,  
Who now no more a vassal to the thief,  
But free to stretch his limbs in lawful  
fight,  
Neigh’d with all gladness as they came,  
and stoop’d  
With a low whinny toward the pair: and  
she  
Kiss’d the white star upon his noble  
front,  
Glad also; then Geraint upon the horse  
Mounted, and reach’d a hand, and on his  
foot  
She set her own and climb’d; he turn’d  
his face  
And kiss’d her climbing, and she cast  
her arms  
About him, and at once they rode away.

And never yet, since high in Paradise  
O’er the four rivers the first roses blew,  
Came purer pleasure unto mortal kind  
Than lived thro’ her, who in that perilous  
hour  
Put hand to hand beneath her husband’s  
heart,  
And felt him hers again: she did not  
weep,  
But o’er her meek eyes came a happy  
mist  
Like that which kept the heart of Eden  
green  
Before the useful trouble of the rain :  
Yet not so misty were her meek blue  
eyes  
As not to see before them on the path,  
Right in the gateway of the bandit hold,  
A knight of Arthur’s court, who laid his  
lance  
In rest, and made as if to fall upon him.  
Then, fearing for his hurt and loss of  
blood,  
She, with her mind all full of what had  
chanced,  
Shriek’d to the stranger ‘Slay not a dead  
man!’  
‘The voice of Enid,’ said the knight;  
but she,  
Beholding it was Edyrn son of Nudd,  
Was moved so much the more, and  
shriek’d again,  
‘O cousin, slay not him who gave you  
life.’  
And Edyrn moving frankly forward spake :  
‘My lord Geraint, I greet you with all  
love;  
I took you for a bandit knight of Doorn;  
And fear not, Enid, I should fall upon  
him,  
Who love you, Prince, with something of  
the love  
Wherewith we love the Heaven that  
chastens us.  
For once, when I was up so high in pride  
That I was halfway down the slope to  
Hell,  
By overthrowing me you threw me higher.  
Now, made a knight of Arthur’s Table  
Round,  
And since I knew this Earl, when I my-  
self  
Was half a bandit in my lawless hour,



I come the mouthpiece of our King to  
Doorm  
(The King is close behind me) bidding  
him  
Disband himself, and scatter all his powers,  
Submit, and hear the judgment of the  
King.'

'He hears the judgment of the King of  
kings,'  
Cried the wan Prince; 'and lo, the  
powers of Doorm  
Are scatter'd,' and he pointed to the field,  
Where, huddled here and there on mound  
and knoll,

Were men and women staring and aghast,  
While some yet fled; and then he plainlier  
told

How the huge Earl lay slain within his  
hall.

But when the knight besought him,  
'Follow me,

Prince, to the camp, and in the King's  
own ear

Speak what has chanced; ye surely  
have endured

Strange chances here alone; that other  
flush'd,

And hung his head, and halted in reply,  
Fearing the mild face of the blameless  
King,

And after madness acted question ask'd:  
Till Edyrn crying, 'If ye will not go

To Arthur, then will Arthur come to you,'  
'Enough,' he said, 'I follow,' and they  
went.

But Enid in their going had two fears,  
One from the bandit scatter'd in the field,

And one from Edyrn. Every now and  
then,

When Edyrn rein'd his charger at her  
side,

She shrank a little. In a hollow land,  
From which old fires have broken, men  
may fear

Fresh fire and ruin. He, perceiving, said:

'Fair and dear cousin, you that most  
had cause

To fear me, fear no longer, I am changed.  
Yourself were first the blameless cause to  
make

My nature's prideful sparkle in the blood

Break into furious flame; being repulsed  
By Yniol and yourself, I schemed and  
wrought

Until I overturn'd him; then set up  
(With one main purpose ever at my heart)

My haughty jousts, and took a paramour;  
Did her mock-honour as the fairest fair,

And, toppling over all antagonism,  
So wax'd in pride, that I believed myself

Unconquerable, for I was wellnigh mad:  
And, but for my main purpose in these

jousts,  
I should have slain your father, seized  
yourself.

I lived in hope that sometime you would  
come

To these my lists with him whom best  
you loved;

And there, poor cousin, with your meek  
blue eyes,

The truest eyes that ever answer'd  
Heaven,

Behold me overturn and trample on him.  
Then, had you cried, or knelt, or pray'd

to me,  
I should not less have kill'd him. And  
you came,—

But once you came,—and with your  
own true eyes

Beheld the man you loved (I speak as  
one

Speaks of a service done him) overthrow  
My proud self, and my purpose three

years old,  
And set his foot upon me, and give me  
life.

There was I broken down; there was I  
saved:

Tho' thence I rode all-shamed, hating  
the life

He gave me, meaning to be rid of it.  
And all the penance the Queen laid upon  
me

Was but to rest awhile within her court;  
Where first as sullen as a beast new-caged,

And waiting to be treated like a wolf,  
Because I knew my deeds were known,  
I found,

Instead of scornful pity or pure scorn,  
Such fine reserve and noble reticence,

Manners so kind, yet stately, such a grace  
Of tenderest courtesy, that I began

To glance behind me at my former life,



And find that it had been the wolf's  
indeed :

And oft I talk'd with Dubric, the high  
saint,

Who, with mild heat of holy oratory,  
Subdued me somewhat to that gentleness,  
Which, when it weds with manhood,  
makes a man.

And you were often there about the  
Queen,

But saw me not, or mark'd not if you  
saw;

Nor did I care or dare to speak with you,  
But kept myself aleof till I was changed;  
And fear not, cousin; I am changed  
indeed.'

He spoke, and Enid easily believed,  
Like simple noble natures, credulous  
Of what they long for, good in friend or  
foe,

There most in those who most have done  
them ill.

And when they reach'd the camp the  
King himself

Advanced to greet them, and beholding  
her

Tho' pale, yet happy, ask'd her not a  
word,

But went apart with Edyrn, whom he held  
in converse for a little, and return'd,

And, gravely smiling, lifted her from  
horse,

And kiss'd her with all pureness, brother-  
like,

And show'd an empty tent allotted her,  
And glancing for a minute, till he saw her

Pass into it, turn'd to the Prince, and  
said :

'Prince, when of late ye pray'd me for  
my leave

To move to your own land, and there  
defend

Your marches, I was prick'd with some  
reproof,

As one that let foul wrong stagnate and be,  
By having look'd too much thro' alien

eyes,  
And wrought too long with delegated  
hands,

Not used mine own : but now behold me  
come

To cleanse this common sewer of all my  
realm,

With Edyrn and with others: have ye  
look'd

At Edyrn? have ye seen how nobly  
changed?

This work of his is great and wonderful.  
His very face with change of heart is  
changed.

The world will not believe a man repents :  
And this wise world of ours is mainly  
right.

Full seldom doth a man repent, or use  
Both grace and will to pick the vicious  
quitch

Of blood and custom wholly out of him,  
And make all clean, and plant himself  
afresh.

Edyrn has done it, weeding all his heart  
As I will weed this land before I go.

I, therefore, made him of our Table  
Round,

Not rashly, but have proved him every-  
way

One of our noblest, our most valorous,  
Sanest and most obedient: and indeed

This work of Edyrn wrought upon him-  
self

After a life of violence, seems to me  
A thousand-fold more great and wonderful

Than if some knight of mine, risking his  
life,

My subject with my subjects under him,  
Should make an onslaught single on a  
realm

Of robbers, tho' he slew them one by one,  
And were himself nigh wounded to the

death.'

So spake the King; low bow'd the  
Prince, and felt

His work was neither great nor wonder-  
ful,

And past to Enid's tent; and thither  
came

The King's own leech to look into his  
hurt;

And Enid tended on him there; and  
there

Her constant motion round him, and the  
breath

Of her sweet tendance hovering over  
him,

Fill'd all the genial courses of his blood  
 With deeper and with ever deeper love,  
 As the south-west that blowing Bala lake  
 Fills all the sacred Dee. So past the  
 days.

But while Geraint lay healing of his  
 hurt,  
 The blameless King went forth and cast  
 his eyes  
 On each of all whom Uther left in charge  
 Long since, to guard the justice of the  
 King:  
 He look'd and found them wanting; and  
 as now  
 Men weed the white horse on the Berk-  
 shire hills  
 To keep him bright and clean as hereto-  
 fore,  
 He rooted out the slothful officer  
 Or guilty, which for bribe had wink'd at  
 wrong,  
 And in their chairs set up a stronger race  
 With hearts and hands, and sent a thou-  
 sand men  
 To till the wastes, and moving everywhere  
 Clear'd the dark places and let in the law,  
 And broke the bandit holds and cleansed  
 the land.

Then, when Geraint was whole again,  
 they past  
 With Arthur to Caerleon upon Usk.  
 There the great Queen once more em-  
 braced her friend,  
 And clothed her in apparel like the day.  
 And tho' Geraint could never take again  
 That comfort from their converse which  
 he took  
 Before the Queen's fair name was breathed  
 upon,  
 He rested well content that all was well.  
 Thence after tarrying for a space they  
 rode,  
 And fifty knights rode with them to the  
 shores  
 Of Severn, and they past to their own  
 land.  
 And there he kept the justice of the King  
 So vigorously yet mildly, that all hearts  
 Applauded, and the spiteful whisper died:  
 And being ever foremost in the chase,  
 And victor at the tilt and tournament,

They call'd him the great Prince and man  
 of men.

But Enid, whom her ladies loved to call  
 Enid the Fair, a grateful people named  
 Enid the Good; and in their halls arose  
 The cry of children, Enids and Geraints  
 Of times to be; nor did he doubt her  
 more,

But rested in her fæalty, till he crown'd  
 A happy life with a fair death, and fell  
 Against the heathen of the Northern Sea  
 In battle, fighting for the blameless King.

#### BALIN AND BALAN.

PELLAM the King, who held and lost with  
 Lot  
 In that first-war, and had his realm restored  
 But render'd tributary, fail'd of late  
 To send his tribute; wherefore Arthur  
 call'd  
 His treasurer, one of many years, and  
 spake,  
 'Go thou with him and him and bring it  
 to us,  
 Lest we should set one truer on his throne.  
 Man's word is God in man.'

His Baron said  
 'We go but harken: there be two strange  
 knights  
 Who sit near Camelot at a fountain-side,  
 A mile beneath the forest, challenging  
 And overthrowing every knight who  
 comes.  
 Wilt thou I undertake them as we pass,  
 And send them to thee?'

Arthur laugh'd upon him.  
 'Old friend, too old to be so young,  
 depart,  
 Delay not thou for aught, but let them  
 sit,  
 Until they find a lustier than themselves.'

So these departed. Early, one fair  
 dawn,  
 The light-wing'd spirit of his youth  
 return'd  
 On Arthur's heart; he arm'd himself and  
 went,  
 So coming to the fountain-side beheld  
 Balin and Balan sitting statuelike,

Brethren, to right and left the spring, that  
down,

From underneath a plume of lady-fern,  
Sang, and the sand danced at the bottom  
of it.

And on the right of Balin Balin's horse  
Was fast beside an alder, on the left  
Of Balan Balan's near a poplartree.  
'Fair Sirs,' said Arthur, 'wherefore sit  
ye here?'

Balin and Balan answer'd, 'For the sake  
Of glory; we be mightier men than all  
In Arthur's court; that also have we  
proved;

For whatsoever knight against us came  
Or I or he have easily overthrown.'

'I too,' said Arthur, 'am of Arthur's  
hall,

But rather proven in his Paynim wars  
Than famous jousts; but see, or proven  
or not,

Whether me likewise ye can overthrow.'  
And Arthur lightly smote the brethren  
down,

And lightly so return'd, and no man knew.

Then Balin rose, and Balan, and beside  
The carolling water set themselves again,  
And spake no word until the shadow  
turn'd;

When from the fringe of coppice round  
them burst

A spangled pursuivant, and crying 'Sirs,  
Rise, follow! ye be sent for by the  
King,'

They follow'd; whom when Arthur seeing  
ask'd

'Tell me your names; why sat ye by the  
well?'

Balin the stillness of a minute broke  
Saying, 'An unmelodious name to thee,  
Balin, "the Savage" — that addition  
thine —

My brother and my better, this man here,  
Balan. I smote upon the naked skull  
A thrall of thine in open hall, my hand  
Was gauntleted; half slew him; for I  
heard

He had spoken evil of me; thy just wrath  
Sent me a three-years' exile from thine  
eyes.

I have not lived my life delightfully:  
For I that did that violence to thy thrall,

Had often wrought some fury on myself,  
Saving for Balan: those three kingless  
years

Have past — were wormwood-bitter to  
me. King,

Methought that if we sat beside the well,  
And hurl'd to ground what knight soever  
spurr'd

Against us, thou would'st take me gladlier  
back,

And make, as ten-times worthier to be  
thine

Than twenty Balins, Balan knight. I  
have said.

Not so — not all. A man of thine to-day  
Abash'd us both, and brake my boast.  
Thy will?'

Said Arthur, 'Thou hast ever spoken  
truth;

Thy too fierce manhood would not let  
thee lie.

Rise, my true knight. As children learn,  
be thou

Wiser for falling! walk with me, and  
move

To music with thine Order and the King.  
Thy chair, a grief to all the brethren,  
stands

Vacant, but thou retake it, mine again!'

Thereafter, when Sir Balin enter'd hall,  
The Lost one Found was greeted as in  
Heaven

With joy that blazed itself in woodland  
wealth

Of leaf, and gayest garlandage of flowers,  
Along the walls and down the board;  
they sat,

And cup clash'd cup; they drank and  
some one sang,

Sweet-voiced, a song of welcome, where-  
upon

Their common shout in chorus, mount-  
ing, made

Those banners of twelve battles overhead  
Stir, as they stir'd of old, when Arthur's  
host

Proclaim'd him Victor, and the day was  
won.

Then Balan added to their Order lived  
A wealthier life than heretofore with these  
And Balin, till their embassy return'd.

‘Sir King,’ they brought report, ‘we  
hardly found,  
So bush’d about it is with gloom, the hall  
Of him to whom ye sent us, Pellain, once  
A Christless foe of thine as ever dash’d  
Horse against horse; but seeing that thy  
realm  
Hath prosper’d in the name of Christ, the  
King  
Took, as in rival heat, to holy things;  
And finds himself descended from the  
Saint  
Arimathean Joseph; him who first  
Brought the great faith to Britain over  
seas;  
He boasts his life as purer than thine  
own;  
Eats scarce enow to keep his pulse abeat;  
Hath push’d aside his faithful wife, nor lets  
Or dame or damsel enter at his gates  
Lest he should be polluted. This gray  
King  
Show’d us a shrine wherein were wonders  
— yea —  
Rich arks with priceless bones of martyr-  
dom,  
Thorns of the crown and shivers of the  
cross,  
And therewithal (for thus he told us)  
brought  
By Holy Joseph hither, that same spear  
Wherewith the Roman pierced the side  
of Christ.  
He much amazed us; after, when we  
sought  
The tribute, answer’d “I have quite fore-  
gone  
All matters of this world: Garlon, mine  
heir,  
Of him demand it,” which this Garlon gave  
With much ado, railing at thine and thee.

‘But when we left, in those deep woods  
we found  
A knight of thine spear-stricken from  
behind,  
Dead, whom we buried; more than one  
of us  
Cried out on Garlon, but a woodman there  
Reported of some demon in the woods  
Was once a man, who driven by evil  
tongues  
From all his fellows, lived alone, and came

To learn black magic, and to hate his kind  
With such a hate, that when he died, his  
soul  
Became a Fiend, which, as the man in life  
Was wounded by blind tongues he saw  
not whence,  
Strikes from behind. This woodman  
show’d the cave  
From which he sallies, and wherein he  
dwelt.  
We saw the hoof-print of a horse, no  
more.’

Then Arthur, ‘Let who goes before  
me, see  
He do not fall behind me: foully slain  
And villainously! who will hunt for me  
This demon of the woods?’ Said Balan,  
‘I!’  
So claim’d the quest and rode away, but  
first,  
Embracing Balin, ‘Good my brother,  
hear!  
Let not thy moods prevail, when I am  
gone  
Who used to lay them! hold them outer  
fiends,  
Who leap at thee to tear thee; shake  
them aside,  
Dreams ruling when wit sleeps! yea, but  
to dream  
That any of these would wrong thee,  
wroungs thyself.  
Witness their flowery welcome. Bound  
are they  
To speak no evil. Truly save for fears,  
My fears for thee, so rich a fellowship  
Would make me wholly blest: thou one  
of them,  
Be one indeed: consider them, and all  
Their bearing in their common bond of  
love,  
No more of hatred than in Heaven itself,  
No more of jealousy than in Paradise.’

So Balan warn’d, and went; Balin  
remain’d:  
Who — for but three brief moons had  
glanced away  
From being knighted till he smote the  
thrall,  
And faded from the presence into years  
Of exile — now would strictlier set himself

To learn what Arthur meant by courtesy,  
Manhood, and knighthood; wherefore  
hover'd round

Lancelot, but when he mark'd his high  
sweet smile

In passing, and a transitory word  
Make knight or churl or child or damsel  
seem

From being smiled at happier in them-  
selves —

Sigh'd, as a boy lame-born beneath a  
height,

That glooms his valley, sighs to see the  
peak

Sun-flush'd, or touch at night the north-  
ern star;

For one from out his village lately climb'd  
And brought report of azure lands and fair,

Far seen to left and right; and he himself  
Hath hardly scaled with help a hundred  
feet

Up from the base: so Balin marvelling  
oft

How far beyond him Lancelot seem'd to  
move,

Groan'd, and at times would mutter,  
'These be gifts,

Born with the blood, not learnable, divine,  
Beyond *my* reach. Well had I foughten  
— well —

In those fierce wars, struck hard — and  
had I crown'd

With my slain self the heaps of whom I  
slew —

So — better! — But this worship of the  
Queen,

That honour too wherein she holds him  
— this,

This was the sunshine that hath given the  
man

A growth, a name that branches o'er the  
rest,

And strength against all odds, and what  
the King

So prizes — overprizes — gentleness.  
Her likewise would I worship an I might.

I never can be close with her, as he  
That brought her hither. Shall I pray the  
King

To let me bear some token of his Queen  
Whereon to gaze, remembering her —  
forget

My heats and violences? live afresh?

What, if the Queen disdain'd to grant it!  
nay

Being so stately-gentle, would she make  
My darkness blackness? and with how  
sweet grace

She greeted my return! Bold will I be —  
Some goodly cognizance of Guinevere,

In lieu of this rough beast upon my shield,  
Langued gules, and tooth'd with grinning  
savagery.'

And Arthur, when Sir Balin sought  
him, said

'What wilt thou bear?' Balin was bold,  
and ask'd

To bear her own crown-royal upon  
shield,

Whereat she smiled and turn'd her to the  
King,

Who answer'd, 'Thou shalt put the crown  
to use.

The crown is but the shadow of the  
King,

And this a shadow's shadow, let him  
have it,

So this will help him of his violences!  
'No shadow,' said Sir Balin, 'O my Queen,

But light to me! no shadow, O my King,  
But golden earnest of a gentler life!'

So Balin bare the crown, and all the  
knights

Approved him, and the Queen, and all  
the world

Made music, and he felt his being move  
In music with his Order, and the King.

The nightingale, full-toned in middle  
May,

Hath ever and anon a note so thin  
It seems another voice in other groves;

Thus, after some quick burst of sudden  
wrath,

The music in him seem'd to change, and  
grow

Faint and far-off.

And once he saw the thrall  
His passion half had gauntleted to death,

That causer of his banishment and shame,  
Smile at him, as he deem'd, presumptu-  
ously:

His arm half rose to strike again, but fell:

The memory of that cognizance on shield  
Weighted it down, but in himself he  
moan'd:

'Too high this mount of Camelot for  
me:  
These high-set courtesies are not for me.  
Shall I not rather prove the worse for  
these?  
Fierier and stormier from restraining,  
break  
Into some madness ev'n before the  
Queen?'

Thus, as a hearth lit in a mountain  
home,  
And glancing on the window, when the  
gloom  
Of twilight deepens round it, seems a  
flame  
That rages in a woodland far below,  
So when his moods were darken'd, court  
and King  
And all the kindly warmth of Arthur's  
hall  
Shadow'd an angry distance: yet he  
strove  
To learn the graces of their Table, fought  
Hard with himself, and seem'd at length  
in peace.

Then chanced, one morning, that Sir  
Balin sat  
Close-bower'd in that garden nigh the  
hall.  
A walk of roses ran from door to door;  
A walk of lilies crost it to the bower:  
And down that range of roses the great  
Queen  
Came with slow steps, the morning on  
her face;  
And all in shadow from the counter door  
Sir Lancelot as to meet her, then at  
once,  
As if he saw not, glanced aside, and  
paced  
The long white walk of lilies toward the  
bower.  
Follow'd the Queen; Sir Balin heard her  
'Prince,  
Art thou so little loyal to thy Queen,  
As pass without good morrow to thy  
Queen?'

To whom Sir Lancelot with his eyes on  
earth,  
'Fain would I still be loyal to the Queen!  
'Yea so,' she said, 'but so to pass me  
by—  
So loyal scarce is loyal to thyself,  
Whom all men rate the king of courtesy.  
Let be: ye stand, fair lord, as in a  
dream.'

Then Lancelot with his hand among  
the flowers,  
'Yea—for a dream. Last night me-  
thought I saw  
That maiden Saint who stands with lily  
in hand  
In yonder shrine. All round her prest  
the dark,  
And all the light upon her silver face  
Flow'd from the spiritual lily that she  
held.  
Lo! these her emblems drew mine eyes  
—away:  
For see, how perfect-pure! As light a  
flush  
As hardly tints the blossom of the quince  
Would mar their charm of stainless  
maidenhood.'

'Sweeter to me,' she said, 'this garden  
rose  
Deep-hued and many-folded! sweeter  
still  
The wild-wood hyacinth and the bloom  
of May.  
Prince, we have ridd'n before among the  
flowers  
In those fair days—not all as cool as  
these,  
Tho' season-earlier. Art thou sad? or  
sick?  
Our noble King will send thee his own  
leech—  
Sick? or for any matter anger'd at me?'

Then Lancelot lifted his large eyes;  
they dwelt  
Deep-tranced on hers, and could not fall:  
her hue  
Changed at his gaze: so turning side by  
side  
They past, and Balin started from his  
bower.



'Queen? subject? but I see not what  
I see.  
Damsel and lover? hear not what I  
hear.  
My father hath begotten me in his wrath.  
I suffer from the things before me,  
know,  
Learn nothing; am not worthy to be  
knight;  
A churl, a clown!' and in him gloom on  
gloom  
Deepen'd: he sharply caught his lance  
and shield,  
Nor stay'd to crave permission of the  
King,  
But, mad for strange adventure, dash'd  
away.

He took the selfsame track as Balan,  
saw  
The fountain where they sat together,  
sigh'd,  
'Was I not better there with him?' and  
rode  
The skylless woods, but under open blue  
Came on the hoarhead woodman at a  
bough  
Wearily hewing. 'Churl, thine axe!'  
he cried,  
Descended, and disjointed it at a blow:  
To whom the woodman utter'd wonder-  
ingly,  
'Lord, thou couldst lay the Devil of  
these woods  
If arm of flesh could lay him.' Balin  
cried,  
'Him, or the viler devil who plays his  
part,  
To lay that devil would lay the Devil in  
me.'  
'Nay,' said the churl, 'our devil is a  
truth,  
I saw the flash of him but yestereven.  
And some *do* say that our Sir Garlon too  
Hath learn'd black magic, and to ride  
unseen.  
Look to the cave.' But Balin answer'd  
him,  
'Old fabler, these be fancies of the churl,  
Look to thy woodcraft,' and so leaving  
him,  
Now with slack rein and careless of him-  
self,

Now with dug spur and raving at him-  
self,  
Now with droopt brow down the long  
glades he rode;  
So mark'd not on his right a cavern-chasm  
Yawn over darkness, where, not far  
within,  
The whole day died, but, dying, gleam'd  
on rocks  
Roof-pendent, sharp; and others from  
the floor,  
Tusklike, arising, made that mouth of  
night  
Whereout the Demon issued up from  
Hell.  
He mark'd not this, but blind and deaf  
to all  
Save that chain'd rage, which ever yelpt  
within,  
Past eastward from the falling sun. At  
once  
He felt the hollow-beaten mosses thud  
And tremble, and then the shadow of a  
spear,  
Shot from behind him, ran along the  
ground.  
Sideways he started from the path, and  
saw,  
With pointed lance as if to pierce, a  
shape,  
A light of armour by him flash, and pass  
And vanish in the woods; and follow'd  
this,  
But all so blind in rage that unawares  
He burst his lance against a forest bough  
Dishorsed himself, and rose again, and  
fled  
Far, till the castle of a King, the hall  
Of Pellam, lichen-bearded, grayly draped  
With streaming grass, appear'd, low-built  
but strong;  
The ruinous donjon as a knoll of moss,  
The battlement overtopt with ivytods,  
A home of bats, in every tower an owl.

Then spake the men of Pellam crying,  
'Lord,  
Why wear ye this crown-royal upon  
shield?'  
Said Balin, 'For the fairest and the best  
Of ladies living gave me this to bear.'  
So stall'd his horse, and strode across the  
court,



But found the greetings both of knight  
and King  
Faint in the low dark hall of banquet:  
leaves  
Laid their green faces flat against the  
panes,  
Sprays grated, and the canker'd boughs  
without  
Whined in the wood; for all was hush'd  
within,  
Till when at least Sir Garlon likewise  
ask'd  
'Why wear ye that crown-royal?' Balin  
said  
'The Queen we worship, Lancelot, I,  
and all,  
As fairest, best and purest, granted me  
To bear it!' Such a sound (for Arthur's  
knights  
Were hated strangers in the hall) as  
makes  
The white swan-mother, sitting, when  
she hears  
A strange knee rustle thro' her secret  
reeds,  
Made Garlon, hissing; then he sourly  
smiled.  
'Fairest I grant her. I have seen; but  
best,  
Best, purest? *thou* from Arthur's hall,  
and yet  
So simple! hast thou eyes, or if, are  
these  
So far besotted that they fail to see  
This fair wife-worship cloaks a secret  
shame?  
Truly, ye men of Arthur be but babes.'

A goblet on the board by Balin,  
boss'd  
With holy Joseph's legend, on his right  
Stood, all of massiest bronze: one side  
had sea  
And ship and sail and angels blowing on  
it:  
And one was rough with wattling, and  
the walls  
Of that low church he built at Glaston-  
bury.  
This Balin graspt, but while in act to  
hurl,  
Thro' memory of that token on the  
shield

Relax'd his hold: 'I will be gentle,' he  
thought,  
'And passing gentle,' caught his hand  
away.  
Then fiercely to Sir Garlon, 'Eyes have I  
That saw to-day the shadow of a spear,  
Shot from behind me, run along the  
ground;  
Eyes too that long have watch'd how  
Lancelot draws  
From homage to the best and purest,  
might,  
Name, manhood, and a grace, but  
scantly thine,  
Who, sitting in thine own hall, canst  
endure  
To mouth so huge a foulness—to thy  
guest,  
Me, me of Arthur's Table. Felon talk!  
Let be! no more!'

But not the less by night  
The scorn of Garlon, poisoning all his  
rest,  
Stung him in dreams. At length, and  
dim thro' leaves  
Blinkt the white morn, sprays grated,  
and old boughs  
Whined in the wood. He rose, de-  
scended, met  
The scorner in the castle court, and fain,  
For hate and loathing, would have past  
him by;  
But when Sir Garlon utter'd mocking-  
wise,  
'What, wear ye still that same crown-  
scandalous?'  
His countenance blacken'd, and his  
forehead veins  
Bloated, and branch'd; and tearing out  
of sheath  
The brand, Sir Balin with a fiery 'Ha!  
So thou be shadow, here I make thee  
ghost,'  
Hard upon helm smote him, and the  
blade flew  
Splintering in six, and clinkt upon the  
stones.  
Then Garlon, reeling slowly backward,  
fell,  
And Balin by the banneret of his helm  
Dragg'd him, and struck, but from the  
castle a cry

Sounded across the court, and — men-at-arms,  
 A score with pointed lances, making at him —  
 He dash'd the pummel at the foremost face,  
 Beneath a low door dipt, and made his feet  
 Wings thro' a glimmering gallery, till he mark'd  
 The portal of King Pellam's chapel wide  
 And inward to the wall; he stept behind;  
 Thence in a moment heard them pass like wolves  
 Howling; but while he stared about the shrine,  
 In which he scarce could spy the Christ for Saints,  
 Beheld before a golden altar lie  
 The longest lance his eyes had ever seen,  
 Point-painted red; and seizing thereupon  
 Push'd thro' an open casement down, lean'd on it,  
 Leapt in a semicircle, and lit on earth;  
 Then hand at ear, and harkening from what side  
 The blindfold rummage buried in the walls  
 Might echo, ran the counter path, and found  
 His charger, mounted on him and away.  
 An arrow whizz'd to the right, one to the left,  
 One overhead; and Pellam's feeble cry  
 'Stay, stay him! he defileth heavenly things  
 With earthly uses' — made him quickly dive  
 Beneath the boughs, and race thro' many a mile  
 Of dense and open, till his goodly horse,  
 Arising wearily at a fallen oak,  
 Stumbled headlong, and cast him face to ground.

Half-wroth he had not ended, but all glad,  
 Knightlike, to find his charger yet unlamed,  
 Sir Balin drew the shield from off his neck,  
 Stared at the priceless cognizance, and thought

'I have shamed thee so that now thou shamest me,  
 Thee will I bear no more,' high on a branch  
 Hung it, and turn'd aside into the woods,  
 And there in gloom cast himself all along,  
 Moaning 'My violences, my violences!'

But now the wholesome music of the wood  
 Was dumb'd by one from out the hall of Mark,  
 A damsel-errant, warbling, as she rode  
 The woodland alleys, Vivien, with her Squire.

'The fire of Heaven has kill'd the barren cold,  
 And kindled all the plain and all the wold.  
 The new leaf ever pushes off the old.  
 The fire of Heaven is not the flame of Hell.

'Old priest, who mumble worship in your quire —  
 Old monk and nun, ye scorn the world's desire,  
 Yet in your frosty cells ye feel the fire!  
 The fire of Heaven is not the flame of Hell.

'The fire of Heaven is on the dusty ways.  
 The wayside blossoms open to the blaze.  
 The whole wood-world is one full peal of praise.  
 The fire of Heaven is not the flame of Hell.

'The fire of Heaven is lord of all things good,  
 And starve not thou this fire within thy blood,  
 But follow Vivien thro' the fiery flood!  
 The fire of Heaven is not the flame of Hell!'

Then turning to her Squire, 'This fire of Heaven,  
 This old sun-worship, boy, will rise again,

And beat the cross to earth, and break  
the King  
And all his Table.'

Then they reach'd a glade,  
Where under one long lane of cloudless  
air

Before another wood, the royal crown  
Sparkled, and swaying upon a restless elm  
Drew the vague glance of Vivien, and her  
Squire;

Amazed were these; 'Lo there,' she  
cried, 'a crown—

Borne by some high lord-prince of  
Arthur's hall,

And there a horse! the rider? where is  
he?

See, yonder lies one dead within the  
wood.

Not dead; he stirs!—but sleeping. I  
will speak.

Hail, royal knight, we break on thy sweet  
rest,

Not, doubtless, all unearn'd by noble  
deeds.

But bounden art thou, if from Arthur's  
hall,

To help the weak. Behold, I fly from  
shame,

A lustful King, who sought to win my  
love

Thro' evil ways: the knight, with whom  
I rode,

Hath suffer'd misadventure, and my  
squire

Hath in him small defence; but thou,  
Sir Prince,

Wilt surely guide me to the warrior King,  
Arthur thè blameless, pure as any maid,

To get me shelter for my maidenhood.  
I charge thee by that crown upon thy  
shield,

And by the great Queen's name, arise  
and hence.'

And Balin rose, 'Thither no more!  
nor Prince

Nor knight am I, but one that hath  
defamed

The cognizance she gave me: here I  
dwell

Savage among the savage woods, here  
die—

Die: let the wolves' black maws en-  
sepulchre.

Their brother beast, whose anger was his  
lord.

O me, that such a name as Guinevere's,  
Which our high Lancelot hath so lifted  
up,

And been thereby uplifted, should thro'  
me,

My violence, and my villainy, come to  
shame.'

Thereat she suddenly laugh'd and  
shrill, anon

Sigh'd all as suddenly. Said Balin to her  
'Is this thy courtesy—to mock me, ha?

Hence, for I will not with thee.' Again  
she sigh'd

'Pardon, sweet lord! we maidens often  
laugh

When sick at heart, when rather we  
should weep.

I knew thee wrong'd. I brake upon thy  
rest,

And now full loth am I to break thy  
dream,

But thou art man, and canst abide a truth,  
Tho' bitter. Hither, boy—and mark  
me well.

Dost thou remember at Caerleon once—  
A year ago—nay, then I love thee not—

Ay, thou rememberest well—one summer  
dawn—

By the great tower—Caerleon upon  
Usk—

Nay, truly we were hidden: this fair  
lord,

The flower of all their vestal knighthood,  
knel't

In amorous homage—knel't—what else?  
—O ay

Knel't, and drew down from out his  
night-black hair

And mumbled that white hand whose  
ring'd caress

Had wander'd from her own King's  
golden head,

And lost itself in darkness, till she  
cried—

I thought the great tower would crash  
down on both—

"Rise, my sweet King, and kiss me on  
the lips,

Thou art my King." This lad, whose  
lightest word  
Is mere white truth in simple nakedness,  
Saw them embrace: he reddens, cannot  
speak,  
So bashful, he! but all the maiden Saints,  
The deathless mother-maidenhood of  
Heaven,  
Cry out upon her. Up then, ride with  
me!  
Talk not of shame! thou canst not, an  
thou would'st,  
Do these more shame than these have  
done themselves.'

She lied with ease; but horror-stricken  
he,  
Remembering that dark bower at Came-  
lot,  
Breathed in a dismal whisper 'It is  
truth.'

Sunnily she smiled 'And even in this  
lone wood,  
Sweet lord, ye do right well to whisper  
this.  
Fools prate, and perish traitors. Woods  
have tongues,  
As walls have ears: but thou shalt go  
with me,  
And we will speak at first exceeding  
low.  
Meet is it the good King be not deceived.  
See now, I set thee high on vantage  
ground,  
From whence to watch the time, and  
eagle-like  
Stoop at thy will on Lancelot and the  
Queen.'

She ceased; his evil spirit upon him  
leapt,  
He ground his teeth together, sprang  
with a yell,  
Tore from the branch, and cast on earth,  
the shield,  
Drove his mail'd heel athwart the royal  
crown,  
Stamp't all into defacement, hurl'd it from  
him  
Among the forest weeds, and cursed the  
tale,  
The told-of, and the teller.

That weird yell,  
Unearthlier than all shriek of bird or  
beast,  
Thrill'd thro' the woods; and Balan  
lurking there  
(His quest was unaccomplish'd) heard  
and thought  
'The scream of that Wood-devil I came  
to quell!'  
Then nearing 'Lo! he hath slain some  
brother-knight,  
And tramples on the goodly shield to  
show  
His loathing of our Order and the Queen.  
My quest, meseems, is here. Or devil  
or man  
Guard thou thine head.' Sir Balin spake  
not word,  
But snatch'd a sudden buckler from the  
Squire,  
And vaulted on his horse, and so they  
crash'd  
In onset, and King Pellam's holy spear,  
Reputed to be red with sinless blood,  
Redden'd at once with sinful, for the  
point  
Across the maiden shield of Balan prick'd  
The hauberk to the flesh; and Balin's  
horse  
Was wearied to the death, and, when  
they clash'd,  
Rolling back upon Balin, crush'd the man  
Inward, and either fell, and swoon'd away.

Then to her Squire mutter'd the  
damsel 'Fools!  
This fellow hath wrought some foulness  
with his Queen:  
Else never had he borne her crown, nor  
raved  
And thus foam'd over at a rival name:  
But thou, Sir Chick, that scarce hast  
broken shell,  
Art yet half-yolk, not even come to  
down—  
Who never sawest Caerleon upon Usk—  
And yet hast often pleaded for my love—  
See what I see, be thou where I have  
been,  
Or else Sir Chick—dismount and loose  
their casques,  
I fain would know what manner of men  
they be.'

And when the Squire had loosed them,  
 'Goodly! — look!  
 They might have cropt the myriad flower  
 of May,  
 And butt each other here, like brainless  
 bulls,  
 Dead for one heifer!'

Then the gentle Squire  
 'I hold them happy, so they died for  
 love:  
 And, Vivien, tho' ye beat me like your  
 dog,  
 I too could die, as now I live, for thee.'

'Live on, Sir Boy,' she cried. 'I  
 better prize  
 The living dog than the dead lion: away!  
 I cannot brook to gaze upon the dead.'  
 Then leapt her palfrey o'er the fallen oak,  
 And bounding forward 'Leave them to  
 the wolves.'

But when their foreheads felt the  
 cooling air,  
 Balin first woke, and seeing that true  
 face,  
 Familiar up from cradle-time, so wan,  
 Crawl'd slowly with low moans to where  
 he lay,  
 And on his dying brother cast himself  
 Dying; and *he* lifted faint eyes; he felt  
 One near him; all at once they found  
 the world,  
 Staring wild-wide; then with a childlike  
 wail,  
 And drawing down the dim disastrous  
 brow  
 That o'er him hung, he kiss'd it, moan'd  
 and spake:

'O Balin, Balin, I that fain had died  
 To save thy life, have brought thee to  
 thy death.  
 Why had ye not the shield I knew? and  
 why  
 Trampled ye thus on that which bare the  
 Crown?'

Then Balin told him brokenly, and in  
 gasps,  
 All that had chanced, and Balan moan'd  
 again.

'Brother, I dwelt a day in Pellam's  
 hall:  
 This Garlon mock'd me, but I heeded  
 not.

And one said "Eat in peace! a liar  
 is he,  
 And hates thee for the tribute!" this  
 good knight

Told me that twice a wanton damsel  
 came,

And sought for Garlon at the castle-  
 gates,

Whom Pellam drove away with holy  
 heat.

I well believe this damsel, and the one  
 Who stood beside thee even now, the  
 same.

"She dwells among the woods," he said,  
 "and meets

And dallies with him in the Mouth of  
 Hell."

Foul are their lives; foul are their lips;  
 they lied.

Pure as our own true Mother is our  
 Queen.'

'O brother,' answer'd Balin, 'woe is  
 me!

My madness all thy life has been thy  
 doom,

Thy curse, and darken'd all thy day;  
 and now

The night has come. I scarce can see  
 thee now.

Goodnight! for we shall never bid again  
 Goodmorrow — Dark my doom was here,  
 and dark

It will be there. I see thee now no  
 more.

I would not mine again should darken  
 thine,

Goodnight, true brother.'

Balan answer'd low  
 'Goodnight, true brother here! good-  
 morrow there!

We two were born together, and we  
 die

Together by one doom: and while he  
 spoke

Closed his death-drowsing eyes, and slept  
 the sleep

With Balin, either lock'd in either's arm.

## MERLIN AND VIVIEN.

A STORM was coming, but the winds  
were still,  
And in the wild woods of Broceliande,  
Before an oak, so hollow, huge and old  
It look'd a tower of ivied masonwork,  
At Merlin's feet the wily Vivien lay.

For he that always bare in bitter  
grudge  
The slights of Arthur and his Table,  
Mark  
The Cornish King, had heard a wander-  
ing voice,  
A minstrel of Caerleon by strong storm  
Blown into shelter at Tintagil, say  
That out of naked knightlike purity  
Sir Lancelot worshipt no unmarried girl  
But the great Queen herself, fought in  
her name,  
Sware by her—vows like theirs, that  
high in heaven  
Love most, but neither marry, nor are  
given  
In marriage, angels of our Lord's report.

He ceased, and then—for Vivien  
sweetly said  
(She sat beside the banquet nearest  
Mark),  
'And is the fair example follow'd, Sir,  
In Arthur's household?'—answer'd inno-  
cently :

'Ay, by some few—ay, truly—youths  
that hold  
It more beseems the perfect virgin knight  
To worship woman as true wife beyond  
All hopes of gaining, than as maiden  
girl.  
They place their pride in Lancelot and  
the Queen.  
So passionate for an utter purity  
Beyond the limit of their bond, are these,  
For Arthur bound them not to singleness,  
Brave hearts and clean! and yet—Go  
guide them—young.'

Then Mark was half in heart to hurl  
his cup  
Straight at the speaker, but forbore: he  
rose

To leave the hall, and, Vivien following  
him,  
Turn'd to her: 'Here are snakes within  
the grass;  
And you methinks, O Vivien, save ye  
fear  
The monkish manhood, and the mask of  
pure  
Worn by this court, can stir them till  
they sting.'

And Vivien answer'd, smiling scorn-  
fully,  
'Why fear? because that foster'd at *thy*  
court  
I savour of thy—virtues? fear them? no.  
As Love, if Love be perfect, casts out  
fear,  
So Hate, if Hate be perfect, casts out  
fear.  
My father died in battle against the  
King,  
My mother on his corpse in open field;  
She bore me there, for born from death  
was I  
Among the dead and sown upon the  
wind—  
And then on thee! and shown the truth  
betimes,  
That old true filth, and bottom of the  
well,  
Where Truth is hidden. Gracious lessons  
thine  
And maxims of the mud! "This Arthur  
pure!  
Great Nature thro' the flesh herself hath  
made  
Gives him the lie! There is no being  
pure,  
My cherub; saith not Holy Writ the  
same?"—  
If I were Arthur, I would have thy blood.  
Thy blessing, stainless King! I bring  
thee back,  
When I have ferreted out their burrow-  
ings,  
The hearts of all this Order in mine  
hand—  
Ay—so that fate and craft and folly  
close,  
Perchance, one curl of Arthur's golden  
beard.  
To me this narrow grizzled fork of thine

Is cleaner-fashion'd — Well, I loved thee  
first,  
That warps the wit.'

Loud laugh'd the graceless Mark.  
But Vivien, into Camelot stealing, lodged  
Low in the city, and on a festal day  
When Guinevere was crossing the great  
hall  
Cast herself down, knelt to the Queen,  
and wail'd.

'Why kneel ye there? What evil have  
ye wrought?  
Rise!' and the damsel bidden rise arose  
And stood with folded hands and down-  
ward eyes  
Of glancing corner, and all meekly said,  
'None wrought, but suffer'd much, an  
orphan maid!  
My father died in battle for thy King,  
My mother on his corpse—in open  
field,  
The sad sea-sounding wastes of Lyon-  
esse —  
Poor wretch — no friend! — and now by  
Mark the King  
For that small charm of feature mine,  
pursued —  
If any such be mine — I fly to thee.  
Save, save me thou — Woman of women  
— thine  
The wreath of beauty, thine the crown of  
power,  
Be thine the balm of pity, O Heaven's  
own white  
Earth-angel, stainless bride of stainless  
King —  
Help, for he follows! take me to thy-  
self!  
O yield me shelter for mine innocence  
Among thy maidens!'

Here her slow sweet eyes  
Fear-tremulous, but humbly hopeful, rose  
Fixt on her hearer's, while the Queen  
who stood  
All glittering like May sunshine on May  
leaves  
In green and gold, and plumed with  
green replied,  
'Peace, child! of overpraise and over-  
blame

We choose the last. Our noble Arthur,  
him  
Ye scarce can overpraise, will hear and  
know.  
Nay — we believe all evil of thy Mark —  
Well, we shall test thee farther; but this  
hour  
We ride a-hawking with Sir Lancelot.  
He hath given us a fair falcon which he  
train'd;  
We go to prove it. Bide ye here the  
while.'

She past; and Vivien murmur'd after,  
'Go!  
I bide the while.' Then thro' the portal-  
arch  
Peering askance, and muttering broken-  
wise,  
As one that labours with an evil dream,  
Beheld the Queen and Lancelot get to  
horse.

'Is that the Lancelot? goodly — ay,  
but gaunt:  
Courteous — amends for gauntness —  
takes her hand —  
That glance of theirs, but for the street,  
had been  
A clinging kiss — how hand lingers in  
hand!  
Let go at last! — they ride away — to  
hawk  
For waterfowl. Royaller game is mine.  
For such a supersensual sensual bond  
As that gray cricket chirpt of at our  
hearth —  
Touch flax with flame — a glance will  
serve — the liars!  
Ah little rat that borest in the dyke  
Thy hole by night to let the boundless deep  
Down upon far-off cities while they  
dance —  
Or dream — of thee they dream'd not —  
nor of me  
These — ay, but each of either: ride, and  
dream  
The mortal dream that never yet was  
mine —  
Ride, ride and dream until ye wake —  
to me!  
Then, narrow court and lubber King,  
farewell!



For Lancelot will be gracious to the rat,  
And our wise Queen, if knowing that I  
know,  
Will hate, loathe, fear — but honour me  
the more.'

Yet while they rode together down the  
plain,  
Their talk was all of training, terms of art,  
Diet and seeling, jesses, leash and lure.  
'She is too noble,' he said, 'to check at  
pies,  
Nor will she rake: there is no baseness  
in her.'  
Here when the Queen demanded as by  
chance,  
'Know ye the stranger woman?' 'Let  
her be,'  
Said Lancelot and unhooded casting off  
The goodly falcon free; she tower'd;  
her bells,  
Tone under tone, shrill'd; and they lifted  
up  
Their eager faces, wondering at the  
strength,  
Boldness and royal knighthood of the  
bird  
Who pounced her quarry and slew it.  
Many a time  
As once — of old — among the flowers —  
they rode.

But Vivien half-forgotten of the Queen  
Among her damsels broidering sat, heard,  
watch'd  
And whisper'd: thro' the peaceful court  
she crept  
And whisper'd: then as Arthur in the  
highest  
Leaven'd the world, so Vivien in the  
lowest,  
Arriving at a time of golden rest,  
And sowing one ill hint from ear to ear,  
While all the heathen lay at Arthur's feet,  
And no quest came, but all was joust and  
play,  
Leaven'd his hall. They heard and let  
her be.

Thereafter as an enemy that has left  
Death in the living waters, and with-  
drawn,  
The wily Vivien stole from Arthur's court.

She hated all the knights, and heard  
in thought  
Their lavish comment when her name  
was named.  
For once, when Arthur walking all alone,  
Vext at a rumour issued from herself  
Of some corruption crept among his  
knights,  
Had met her, Vivien, being greeted fair,  
Would fain have wrought upon his cloudy  
mood  
With reverent eyes mock-loyal, shaken  
voice,  
And flutter'd adoration, and at last  
With dark sweet hints of some who  
prized him more  
Than who should prize him most; at  
which the King  
Had gazed upon her blankly and gone  
by:  
But one had watch'd, and had not held  
his peace:  
It made the laughter of an afternoon  
That Vivien should attempt the blame-  
less King.  
And after that, she set herself to gain  
Him, the most famous man of all those  
times,  
Merlin, who knew the range of all their  
arts,  
Had built the King his havens, ships,  
and halls,  
Was also Bard, and knew the starry  
heavens;  
The people call'd him Wizard; whom at  
first  
She play'd about with slight and sprightly  
talk,  
And vivid smiles, and faintly-venom'd  
points  
Of slander, glancing here and grazing  
there;  
And yielding to his kindlier moods, the  
Seer  
Would watch her at her petulance, and  
play,  
Ev'n when they seem'd unlovable, and  
laugh  
As those that watch a kitten; thus he  
grew  
Tolerant of what he half disdain'd, and  
she,  
Perceiving that she was but half disdain'd,

Began to break her sports with graver fits,  
 Turn red or pale, would often when they  
     met  
 Sigh fully, or all-silent gaze upon him  
 With such a fixt devotion, that the old  
     man,  
 Tho' doubtful, felt the flattery, and at  
     times  
 Would flatter his own wish in age for love,  
 And half believe her true: for thus at  
     times  
 He waver'd; but that other clung to him,  
 Fixt in her will, and so the seasons went.

Then fell on Merlin a great melancholy;  
 He walk'd with dreams and darkness,  
     and he found  
 A doom that ever poised itself to fall,  
 An ever-moaning battle in the mist,  
 World-war of dying flesh against the  
     life,  
 Death in all life and lying in all love,  
 The meanest having power upon the  
     highest,  
 And the high purpose broken by the  
     worm.

So leaving Arthur's court he gain'd the  
     beach;  
 There found a little boat, and stept into it;  
 And Vivien follow'd, but he mark'd her  
     not.  
 She took the helm and he the sail; the  
     boat  
 Drave with a sudden wind across the  
     deeps,  
 And touching Breton sands, they dis-  
     embark'd.  
 And then she follow'd Merlin all the way,  
 Ev'n to the wild woods of Broceliande.  
 For Merlin once had told her of a charm,  
 The which if any wrought on any one  
 With woven paces and with waving arms,  
 The man so wrought on ever seem'd to lie  
 Closed in the four walls of a hollow tower,  
 From which was no escape for evermore;  
 And none could find that man for ever-  
     more,  
 Nor could he see but him who wrought  
     the charm  
 Coming and going, and he lay as dead  
 And lost to life and use and name and  
     fame.

And Vivien ever sought to work the  
     charm  
 Upon the great Enchanter of the Time,  
 As fancying that her glory would be great  
 According to his greatness whom she  
     quench'd.

There lay she all her length and kiss'd  
     his feet,  
 As if in deepest reverence and in love.  
 A twist of gold was round her hair; a  
     robe  
 Of samite without price, that more  
     express  
 Than hid her, clung about her lissome  
     limbs,  
 In colour like the satin-shining palm  
 On shallows in the windy gleams of March:  
 And while she kiss'd them, crying,  
     'Trample me,  
 Dear feet, that I have follow'd thro' the  
     world,  
 And I will pay you worship; tread me  
     down  
 And I will kiss you for it;' he was mute:  
 So dark a forethought roll'd about his  
     brain,  
 As on a dull day in an Ocean cave  
 The blind wave feeling round his long  
     sea-hall  
 In silence: wherefore, when she lifted up  
 A face of sad appeal, and spake and said,  
 'O Merlin, do ye love me?' and again,  
 'O Merlin, do ye love me?' and once  
     more,  
 'Great Master, do ye love me?' he was  
     mute.  
 And lissome Vivien, holding by his heel,  
 Writhed toward him, slid up his knee  
     and sat,  
 Behind his ankle twined her hollow feet  
 Together, curv'd an arm about his neck,  
 Clung like a snake; and letting her left  
     hand  
 Droop from his mighty shoulder, as a leaf,  
 Made with her right a comb of pearl to  
     part  
 The lists of such a beard as youth gone  
     out  
 Had left in ashes: then he spoke and  
     said,  
 Not looking at her, 'Who are wise in  
     love

Love most, say least,' and Vivien answer'd quick,

'I saw the little elf-god eyeless once  
In Arthur's arras hall at Camelot:  
But neither eyes nor tongue—O stupid child!

Yet you are wise who say it; let me think  
Silence is wisdom: I am silent then,  
And ask no kiss;' then adding all at once,  
'And lo, I clothe myself with wisdom,'  
drew

The vast and shaggy mantle of his beard  
Across her neck and bosom to her knee,  
And call'd herself a gilded summer fly  
Caught in a great old tyrant spider's  
web,

Who meant to eat her up in that wild  
wood

Without one word. So Vivien call'd her-  
self,

But rather seem'd a lovely baleful star  
Veil'd in gray vapour; till he sadly  
smiled:

'To what request for what strange boon,'  
he said,

'Are these your pretty tricks and fooleries,  
O Vivien, the preamble? yet my thanks,  
For these have broken up my melancholy.'

And Vivien answer'd smiling saucily,  
'What, O my Master, have ye found  
your voice?

I bid the stranger welcome. Thanks at  
last!

But yesterday you never open'd lip,  
Except indeed to drink: no cup had we:  
In mine own lady palms I cull'd the  
spring

That gather'd trickling dropwise from  
the cleft,

And made a pretty cup of both my hands  
And offer'd you it kneeling: then you  
drank

And knew no more, nor gave me one  
poor word;

O no more thanks than might a goat  
have given

With no more sign of reverence than a  
beard.

And when we halted at that other well,  
And I was faint to swooning, and you lay  
Foot-gilt with all the blossom-dust of  
those

Deep meadows we had traversed, did  
you know

That Vivien bathed your feet before her  
own?

And yet no thanks: and all thro' this wild  
wood

And all this morning when I fondled  
you:

Boon, ay, there was a boon, one not so  
strange—

How had I wrong'd you? surely ye are  
wise,

But such a silence is more wise than kind.'

And Merlin lock'd his hand in hers and  
said:

'O did ye never lie upon the shore,  
And watch the curl'd white of the com-  
ing wave

Glass'd in the slippery sand before it  
breaks?

Ev'n such a wave, but not so pleasurable,  
Dark in the glass of some presageful  
mood,

Had I for three days seen, ready to fall.  
And then I rose and fled from Arthur's  
court

To break the mood. You follow'd me  
unask'd;

And when I look'd, and saw you follow-  
ing still,

My mind involved yourself the nearest  
thing

In that mind-mist: for shall I tell you  
truth?

You seem'd that wave about to break  
upon me

And sweep me from my hold upon the  
world,

My use and name and fame. Your par-  
don, child.

Your pretty sports have brighten'd all  
again.

And ask your boon, for boon I owe you  
thrice,

Once for wrong done you by confusion,  
next

For thanks it seems till now neglected,  
last

For these your dainty gambols: where-  
fore ask;

And take this boon so strange and not so  
strange.'

And Vivien answer'd smiling mourn-  
fully:  
'O not so strange as my long asking it,  
Not yet so strange as you yourself are  
strange,  
Nor half so strange as that dark mood of  
yours.  
I ever fear'd ye were not wholly mine;  
And see, yourself have own'd ye did me  
wrong.  
The people call you prophet: let it be:  
But not of those that can expound them-  
selves.  
Take Vivien for expounder; she will call  
That three-days-long presageful gloom of  
yours  
No presage, but the same mistrustful  
mood  
That makes you seem less noble than  
yourself,  
Whenever I have ask'd this very boon,  
Now ask'd again: for see you not, dear  
love,  
That such a mood as that, which lately  
gloom'd  
Your fancy when ye saw me following  
you,  
Must make me fear still more you are not  
mine,  
Must make me yearn still more to prove  
you mine,  
And make me wish still more to learn  
this charm  
Of woven paces and of waving hands,  
As proof of trust. O Merlin, teach it me.  
The charm so taught will charm us both  
to rest.  
For, grant me some slight power upon  
your fate,  
I, feeling that you felt me worthy trust,  
Should rest and let you rest, knowing you  
mine.  
And therefore be as great as ye are named,  
Not muffled round with selfish reticence.  
How hard you look and how denyingly!  
O, if you think this wickedness in me,  
That I should prove it on you unawares,  
That makes me passing wrathful; then  
our bond  
Had best be loosed for ever: but think  
or not,  
By Heaven that hears I tell you the clean  
truth,

As clean as blood of babes, as white as  
milk:

O Merlin, may this earth, if ever I,  
If these unwitty wandering wits of mine,  
Ev'n in the jumbled rubbish of a dream,  
Have tript on such conjectural treachery—  
May this hard earth cleave to the Nadir  
hell  
Down, down, and close again, and nip me  
flat,  
If I be such a traitress. Yield my boon,  
Till which I scarce can yield you all I am;  
And grant my re-reiterated wish,  
The great proof of your love: because I  
think,  
However wise, ye hardly know me yet.'

And Merlin loosed his hand from hers  
and said,  
'I never was less wise, however wise,  
Too curious Vivien, tho' you talk of trust,  
Than when I told you first of such a  
charm.  
Yea, if ye talk of trust I tell you this,  
Too much I trusted when I told you that,  
And stir'd this vice in you which ruin'd  
man  
Thro' woman the first hour; for howsoe'er  
In children a great curiousness be well,  
Who have to learn themselves and all the  
world,  
In you, that are no child, for still I find  
Your face is practised when I spell the  
lines,  
I call it, — well, I will not call it vice:  
But since you name yourself the summer  
fly,  
I well could wish a cobweb for the gnat,  
That settles, beaten back, and beaten back  
Settles, till one could yield for weariness:  
But since I will not yield to give you  
power  
Upon my life and use and name and fame,  
Why will ye never ask some other boon?  
Yea, by God's rood, I trusted you too  
much.'

And Vivien, like the tenderest-hearted  
maid  
That ever bided tryst at village stile,  
Made answer, either eyelid wet with tears:  
'Nay, Master, be not wrathful with your  
maid;

Caress her: let her feel herself forgiven  
Who feels no heart to ask another boon.  
I think ye hardly know the tender rhyme  
Of "trust me not at all or all in all."

I heard the great Sir Lancelot sing it  
once,

And it shall answer for me. Listen to it.

"In Love, if Love be Love, if Love be  
ours,

Faith and unfaith can ne'er be equal  
powers:

Unfaith in aught is want of faith in all.

"It is the little rift within the lute,  
That by and by will make the music mute,  
And ever widening slowly silence all.

"The little rift within the lover's lute  
Or little pitted speck in garner'd fruit,  
That rotting inward slowly moulders all.

"It is not worth the keeping: let it go:  
But shall it? answer, darling, answer, no.  
And trust me not at all or all in all."

O Master, do ye love my tender rhyme?'

And Merlin look'd and half believed  
her true,

So tender was her voice, so fair her face,  
So sweetly gleam'd her eyes behind her  
tears

Like sunlight on the plain behind a  
shower:

And yet he answer'd half indignantly:

'Far other was the song that once I  
heard

By this huge oak, sung nearly where we  
sit:

For here we met, some ten or twelve of  
us,

To chase a creature that was current  
then

In these wild woods, the hart with golden  
horns.

It was the time when first the question  
rose

About the founding of a Table Round,  
That was to be, for love of God and men  
And noble deeds, the flower of all the  
world.

And each incited each to noble deeds.  
And while we waited, one, the youngest  
of us,

We could not keep him silent, out he  
flash'd,

And into such a song, such fire for fame,  
Such trumpet-blowings in it, coming down  
To such a stern and iron-clashing close,  
That when he stopt we long'd to hurl  
together,

And should have done it; but the beau-  
teous beast

Scared by the noise upstart'd at our feet,  
And like a silver shadow slipt away  
Thro' the dim land; and all day long  
we rode

Thro' the dim land against a rushing  
wind,

That glorious roundel echoing in our  
ears,

And chased the flashes of his golden  
horns

Until they vanish'd by the fairy well  
That laughs at iron—as our warriors  
did—

Where children cast their pins and nails,  
and cry,

"Laugh, little well!" but touch it with  
a sword,

It buzzes fiercely round the point; and  
there

We lost him: such a noble song was  
that.

But, Vivien, when you sang me that  
sweet rhyme,

I felt as tho' you knew this cursed charm,  
Were proving it on me, and that I lay  
And felt them slowly ebbing, name and  
fame.'

And Vivien answer'd, smiling mourn-  
fully:

'O mine have ebb'd away for evermore,  
And all thro' following you to this wild  
wood,

Because I saw you sad, to comfort you.  
Lo now, what hearts have men! they  
never mount

As high as woman in her selfless mood.  
And touching fame, howe'er ye scorn my  
song,

Take one verse more—the lady speaks  
it—this:

“My name, once mine, now thine, is  
 closelier mine,  
 For fame, could fame be mine, that fame  
 were thine,  
 And shame, could shame be thine, that  
 shame were mine.  
 So trust me not at all or all in all.”

‘Says she not well? and there is more  
 — this rhyme  
 Is like the fair pearl-necklace of the  
 Queen,  
 That burst in dancing, and the pearls  
 were split;  
 Some lost, some stolen, some as relics  
 kept.  
 But nevermore the same two sister pearls  
 Ran down the silken thread to kiss each  
 other  
 On her white neck — so is it with this  
 rhyme:  
 It lives dispersedly in many hands,  
 And every minstrel sings it differently;  
 Yet is there one true line, the pearl of  
 pearls:  
 “Man dreams of Fame while woman  
 wakes to love.”  
 Yea! Love, tho’ Love were of the gross-  
 est, carves  
 A portion from the solid present, eats  
 And uses, careless of the rest; but Fame,  
 The Fame that follows death is nothing  
 to us;  
 And what is Fame in life but half-dis-  
 fame,  
 And counterchanged with darkness? ye  
 yourself  
 Know well that Envy calls you Devil’s son,  
 And since ye seem the Master of all Art,  
 They fain would make you Master of  
 all vice.’

And Merlin lock’d his hand in hers  
 and said,  
 ‘I once was looking for a magic weed,  
 And found a fair young squire who sat  
 alone,  
 Had carved himself a knightly shield of  
 wood,  
 And then was painting on it fancied arms,  
 Azure, an Eagle rising, or the Sun  
 In dexter chief; the scroll “I follow  
 fame.”

And speaking not, but leaning over him,  
 I took his brush and blotted out the bird,  
 And made a Gardener putting in a graff,  
 With this for motto, “Rather use than  
 fame.”

You should have seen him blush; but  
 afterwards  
 He made a stalwart knight. O Vivien,  
 For you, methinks you think you love  
 me well;

For me, I love you somewhat; rest: and  
 Love  
 Should have some rest and pleasure in  
 himself,

Not ever be too curious for a boon,  
 Too prurient for a proof against the grain  
 Of him ye say ye love: but Fame with  
 men,

Being but ampler means to serve man-  
 kind,  
 Should have small rest or pleasure in  
 herself,

But work as vassal to the larger love,  
 That dwarfs the petty love of one to one.  
 Use gave me Fame at first, and Fame  
 again

Increasing gave me use. Lo, there my  
 boon!

What other? for men sought to prove  
 me vile,

Because I fain had given them greater  
 wits:

And then did Envy call me Devil’s son:  
 The sick weak beast seeking to help  
 herself

By striking at her better, miss’d, and  
 brought

Her own claw back, and wounded her  
 own heart.

Sweet were the days when I was all  
 unknown,

But when my name was lifted up, the  
 storm

Brake on the mountain and I cared not  
 for it.

Right well know I that Fame is half-  
 dis-fame,

Yet needs must work my work. That  
 other fame,

To one at least, who hath not children,  
 vague,

The cackle of the unborn about the grave,  
 I cared not for it: a single misty star,



Which is the second in a line of stars  
That seem a sword beneath a belt of  
three,  
I never gazed upon it but I dreamt  
Of some vast charm concluded in that  
star  
To make fame nothing. Wherefore, if  
I fear,  
Giving you power upon me thro' this  
charm,  
That you might play me falsely, having  
power,  
However well ye think ye love me now  
(As sons of kings loving in pupilage  
Have turn'd to tyrants when they came  
to power),  
I rather dread the loss of use than fame;  
If you—and not so much from wicked-  
ness,  
As some wild turn of anger, or a mood  
Of overstrain'd affection, it may be,  
To keep me all to your own self,— or else  
A sudden spurt of woman's jealousy,—  
Should try this charm on whom ye say  
ye love.'

And Vivien answer'd smiling as in  
wrath:  
'Have I not sworn? I am not trusted.  
Good!  
Well, hide it, hide it; I shall find it out;  
And being found take heed of Vivien.  
A woman and not trusted, doubtless I  
Might feel some sudden turn of anger  
born  
Of your misfaith; and your fine epithet  
Is accurate too, for this full love of mine  
Without the full heart back may merit well  
Your term of overstrain'd. So used as I,  
My daily wonder is, I love at all.  
And as to woman's jealousy, O why not?  
O to what end, except a jealous one,  
And one to make me jealous if I love,  
Was this fair charm invented by yourself?  
I well believe that all about this world  
Ye cage a buxom captive here and there,  
Closed in the four walls of a hollow tower  
From which is no escape for evermore.'

Then the great Master merrily answer'd  
her:  
'Full many a love in loving youth was  
mine;

I needed then no charm to keep them  
mine  
But youth and love; and that full heart  
of yours  
Whereof ye prattle, may now assure you  
mine;  
So live uncharm'd. For those who  
wrought it first,  
The wrist is parted from the hand that  
waved,  
The feet unmortised from their ankle-  
bones  
Who paced it, ages back: but will ye  
hear  
The legend as in guerdon for your rhyme?

'There lived a king in the most Eastern  
East,  
Less old than I, yet older, for my blood  
Hath earnest in it of far springs to be.  
A tawny pirate anchor'd in his port,  
Whose bark had plunder'd twenty name-  
less isles;  
And passing one, at the high peep of  
dawn,  
He saw two cities in a thousand boats  
All fighting for a woman on the sea.  
And pushing his black craft among them  
all,  
He lightly scatter'd theirs and brought  
her off,  
With loss of half his people arrow-slain;  
A maid so smooth, so white, so wonderful,  
They said a light came from her when  
she moved:  
And since the pirate would not yield her  
up,  
The King impaled him for his piracy;  
Then made her Queen: but those isle-  
nurtured eyes  
Waged such unwilling tho' successful  
war  
On all the youth, they sicken'd; councils  
thinn'd,  
And armies waned, for magnet-like she  
drew  
The rustiest iron of old fighters' hearts;  
And beasts themselves would worship;  
camels knelt  
Unbidden, and the brutes of mountain  
back  
That carry kings in castles, bow'd black  
knees



Of homage, ringing with their serpent  
hands,  
To make her smile, her golden ankle-bells.  
What wonder, being jealous, that he sent  
His horns of proclamation out thro' all  
The hundred under-kingdoms that he  
sway'd  
To find a wizard who might teach the  
King  
Some charm, which being wrought upon  
the Queen  
Might keep her all his own: to such a  
one  
He promised more than ever king has  
given,  
A league of mountain full of golden mines,  
A province with a hundred miles of coast,  
A palace and a princess, all for him:  
But on all those who tried and fail'd, the  
King  
Pronounced a dismal sentence, meaning  
by it  
To keep the list low and pretenders back,  
Or like a king, not to be trifled with—  
Their heads should moulder on the city  
gates.  
And many tried and fail'd, because the  
charm  
Of nature in her overbore their own:  
And many a wizard brow bleach'd on the  
walls:  
And many weeks a troop of carrion crows  
Hung like a cloud above the gateway  
towers.'

And Vivien breaking in upon him, said:  
'I sit and gather honey; yet, methinks,  
Thy tongue has tript a little: ask thyself.  
The lady never made *unwilling* war  
With those fine eyes: she had her pleas-  
ure in it,  
And made her good man jealous with  
good cause.  
And lived there neither dame nor damsel  
then  
Wroth at a lover's loss? were all as tame,  
I mean, as noble, as their Queen was fair?  
Not one to flirt a venom at her eyes,  
Or pinch a murderous dust into her drink,  
Or make her paler with a poison'd rose?  
Well, those were not our days: but did  
they find  
A wizard? Tell me, was he like to thee?'

She ceased, and made her lithe arm  
round his neck  
Tighten, and then drew back, and let her  
eyes  
Speak for her, glowing on him, like a  
bride's  
On her new lord, her own, the first of  
men.

He answer'd laughing, 'Nay, not like  
to me.  
At last they found—his foragers for  
charms—  
A little glassy-headed hairless man,  
Who lived alone in a great wild on grass;  
Read but one book, and ever reading  
grew  
So grated down and filed away with  
thought,  
So lean his eyes were monstrous; while  
the skin  
Clung but to crate and basket, ribs and  
spine.  
And since he kept his mind on one sole  
aim,  
Nor ever touch'd fierce wine, nor tasted  
flesh,  
Nor own'd a sensual wish, to him the wall  
That sunders ghosts and shadow-casting  
men  
Became a crystal, and he saw them thro' it,  
And heard their voices talk behind the  
wall,  
And learnt their elemental secrets, powers  
And forces; often o'er the sun's bright eye  
Drew the vast eyelid of an inky cloud,  
And lash'd it at the base with slanting  
storm;  
Or in the noon of mist and driving rain,  
When the lake whiten'd and the pine-  
wood roar'd,  
And the cairn'd mountain was a shadow,  
sunn'd  
The world to peace again: here was the  
man.  
And so by force they dragg'd him to the  
King.  
And then he taught the King to charm  
the Queen  
In such-wise, that no man could see her  
more,  
Nor saw she save the King, who wrought  
the charm,

Coming and going, and she lay as dead,  
 And lost all use of life: but when the  
 King  
 Made proffer of the league of golden  
 mines,  
 The province with a hundred miles of  
 coast,  
 The palace and the princess, that old  
 man  
 Went back to his old wild, and lived on  
 grass,  
 And vanish'd, and his book came down  
 to me.'

And Vivien answer'd smiling saucily:  
 'Ye have the book: the charm is written  
 in it:  
 Good: take my counsel: let me know it  
 at once:  
 For keep it like a puzzle chest in chest,  
 With each chest lock'd and padlock'd  
 thirty-fold,  
 And whelm all this beneath as vast a  
 mound  
 As after furious battle turfs the slain  
 On some wild down above the windy deep,  
 I yet should strike upon a sudden means  
 To dig, pick, open, find and read the  
 charm:  
 Then, if I tried it, who should blame me  
 then?'

And smiling as a master smiles at one  
 That is not of his school, nor any school  
 But that where blind and naked Ignorance  
 Delivers brawling judgments, unashamed,  
 On all things all day long, he answer'd  
 her:

'Thou read the book, my pretty Vivien!  
 O ay, it is but twenty pages long,  
 But every page having an ample marge,  
 And every marge enclosing in the midst  
 A square of text that looks a little blot,  
 The text no larger than the limbs of  
 fleas;  
 And every square of text an awful charm,  
 Writ in a language that has long gone by.  
 So long, that mountains have arisen since  
 With cities on their flanks—thou read  
 the book!  
 And every margin scribbled, crost, and  
 cramm'd

With comment, densest condensation,  
 hard  
 To mind and eye; but the long sleepless  
 nights  
 Of my long life have made it easy to  
 me.  
 And none can read the text, not even I;  
 And none can read the comment but  
 myself;  
 And in the comment did I find the charm.  
 O, the results are simple; a mere child  
 Might use it to the harm of any one,  
 And never could undo it: ask no more:  
 For tho' you should not prove it upon  
 me,  
 But keep that oath ye sware, ye might,  
 perchance,  
 Assay it on some one of the Table Round,  
 And all because ye dream they babble  
 of you.'

And Vivien, frowning in true anger,  
 said:  
 'What dare the full-fed liars say of me?  
*They* ride abroad redressing human  
 wrongs!  
 They sit with knife in meat and wine in  
 horn!  
*They* bound to holy vows of chastity!  
 Were I not woman, I could tell a tale.  
 But you are man, you well can under-  
 stand  
 The shame that cannot be explain'd for  
 shame.  
 Not one of all the drove should touch  
 me: swine!'

Then answer'd Merlin careless of her  
 words:  
 'You breathe but accusation vast and  
 vague,  
 Spleen-born, I think, and proofless. If  
 ye know,  
 Set up the charge ye know, to stand or  
 fall!'

And Vivien answer'd frowning wrath-  
 fully:  
 'O ay, what say ye to Sir Valence, him  
 Whose kinsman left him watcher o'er  
 his wife  
 And two fair babes, and went to distant  
 lands;

Was one year gone, and on returning  
 found  
 Not two but three? there lay the reck-  
 ling, one  
 But one hour old! What said the happy  
 sire?  
 A seven-months' babe had been a truer  
 gift.  
 Those twelve sweet moons confused his  
 fatherhood.'

Then answer'd Merlin, 'Nay, I know  
 the tale.  
 Sir Valence wedded with an outland  
 dame:  
 Some cause had kept him sunder'd from  
 his wife:  
 One child they had: it lived with her:  
 she died:  
 His kinsman travelling on his own affair  
 Was charged by Valence to bring home  
 the child.  
 He brought, not found it therefore: take  
 the truth.'

'O ay,' said Vivien, 'overttrue a tale.  
 What say ye then to sweet Sir Sagramore,  
 That ardent man? "to pluck the flower  
 in season,"  
 So says the song, "I trow it is no trea-  
 son."  
 O Master, shall we call him overquick  
 To crop his own sweet rose before the  
 hour?'

And Merlin answer'd, 'Overquick art  
 thou  
 To catch a loathly plume fall'n from the  
 wing  
 Of that foul bird of rapine whose whole  
 prey  
 Is man's good name: he never wrong'd  
 his bride.  
 I know the tale. An angry gust of  
 wind  
 Puff'd out his torch among the myriad-  
 room'd  
 And many-corridor'd complexities  
 Of Arthur's palace: then he found a  
 door,  
 And darkling felt the sculptured ornament  
 That wreathen round it made it seem his  
 own;

And wearied out made for the couch and  
 slept,  
 A stainless man beside a stainless maid;  
 And either slept, nor knew of other there;  
 Till the high dawn piercing the royal rose  
 In Arthur's casement glimmer'd chastely  
 down,  
 Blushing upon them blushing, and at once  
 He rose without a word and parted from  
 her:  
 But when the thing was blazed about the  
 court,  
 The brute world howling forced them into  
 bonds,  
 And as it chanced they are happy, being  
 pure.'

'O ay,' said Vivien, 'that were likely  
 too.  
 What say ye then to fair Sir Percivale  
 And of the horrid foulness that he  
 wrought,  
 The saintly youth, the spotless lamb of  
 Christ,  
 Or some black wether of St. Satan's fold.  
 What, in the precincts of the chapel-yard,  
 Among the knightly brasses of the graves,  
 And by the cold *Hic Jacets* of the dead!'

And Merlin answer'd careless of her  
 charge,  
 'A sober man is Percivale and pure;  
 But once in life was fluster'd with new  
 wine,  
 Then paced for coolness in the chapel-  
 yard;  
 Where one of Satan's shepherdesses  
 caught  
 And meant to stamp him with her mas-  
 ter's mark;  
 And that he sinn'd is not believable;  
 For, look upon his face!—but if he  
 sinn'd,  
 The sin that practice burns into the blood,  
 And not the one dark hour which brings  
 remorse,  
 Will brand us, after, of whose fold we be:  
 Or else were he, the holy king, whose  
 hymns  
 Are chanted in the minster, worse than  
 all.  
 But is your spleen froth'd out, or have ye  
 more?'

And Vivien answer'd frowning yet in  
wrath:

'O ay; what say ye to Sir Lancelot,  
friend?

Traitor or true? that commerce with the  
Queen,

I ask you, is it clamour'd by the child,  
Or whisper'd in the corner? do ye know  
it?'

To which he answer'd sadly, 'Yea, I  
know it.

Sir Lancelot went ambassador, at first,  
To fetch her, and she watch'd him from  
her walls.

A rumour runs, she took him for the King,  
So fixt her fancy on him: let them be.

But have ye no one word of loyal praise  
For Arthur, blameless King and stainless  
man?'

She answer'd with a low and chuckling  
laugh:

'Man! is he man at all, who knows and  
winks?

Sees what his fair bride is and does, and  
winks?

By which the good King means to blind  
himself,

And blinds himself and all the Table  
Round

To all the foulness that they work. My-  
self

Could call him (were it not for woman-  
hood)

The pretty, popular name such manhood  
earns,

Could call him the main cause of all  
their crime;

Yea, were he not crown'd King, coward,  
and fool.'

Then Merlin to his own heart, loath-  
ing, said:

'O true and tender! O my liege and  
King!

O selfless man and stainless gentleman,  
Who wouldst against thine own eye-wit-  
ness fain

Have all men true and leal, all women  
pure;

How, in the mouths of base interpreters,  
From over-fineness not intelligible

To things with every sense as false and  
foul

As the poach'd filth that floods the  
middle street,

Is thy white blamelessness accounted  
blame!'

But Vivien, deeming Merlin overborne  
By instance, recommenced, and let her  
tongue

Rage like a fire among the noblest  
names,

Polluting, and imputing her whole self,  
Defaming and defacing, till she left

Not even Lancelot brave, nor Galahad  
clean.

Her words had issue other than she  
will'd.

He dragg'd his eyebrow bushes down,  
and made

A snowy penthouse for his hollow eyes,  
And mutter'd in himself, 'Tell *her* the  
charm!

So, if she had it, would she rail on me  
To snare the next, and if she have it not  
So will she rail. What did the wanton  
say?

"Not mount as high;" we scarce can  
sink as low:

For men at most differ as Heaven and  
earth,

But women, worst and best, as Heaven  
and Hell.

I know the Table Round, my friends of  
old;

All brave, and many generous, and some  
chaste.

She cloaks the scar of some repulse with  
lies;

I well believe she tempted them and fail'd,  
Being so bitter: for fine plots may fail,

Tho' harlots paint their talk as well as face  
With colours of the heart that are not  
theirs.

I will not let her know: nine tithes of  
times

Face-flatterer and backbiter are the same.  
And they, sweet soul, that most impute a  
crime

Are prone to it, and impute themselves,  
Wanting the mental range; or low desire

Not to feel lowest makes them level all;

Yea, they would pare the mountain to the plain,  
 To leave an equal baseness; and in this  
 Are harlots like the crowd, that if they find  
 Some stain or blemish in a name of note,  
 Not grieving that their greatest are so small,  
 Inflate themselves with some insane delight,  
 And judge all nature from her feet of clay,  
 Without the will to lift their eyes, and see  
 Her godlike head crown'd with spiritual fire,  
 And touching other worlds. I am weary  
 of her.'

He spoke in words part heard, in  
 whispers part,  
 Half-suffocated in the hoary fell  
 And many-winter'd fleece of throat and chin.  
 But Vivien, gathering somewhat of his  
 mood,  
 And hearing 'harlot' mutter'd twice or thrice,  
 Leapt from her session on his lap, and stood  
 Stiff as a viper frozen; loathsome sight,  
 How from the rosy lips of life and love,  
 Flash'd the bare-grinning skeleton of death!  
 White was her cheek; sharp breaths of  
 anger puff'd  
 Her fairy nostril out; her hand half-clench'd  
 Went faltering sideways downward to her belt,  
 And feeling; had she found a dagger there  
 (For in a wink the false love turns to hate)  
 She would have stabb'd him; but she found it not:  
 His eye was calm, and suddenly she took  
 To bitter weeping like a beaten child,  
 A long, long weeping, not consolable.  
 Then her false voice made way, broken  
 with sobs:

'O crueller than was ever told in tale,  
 Or sung in song! O vainly lavish'd love!  
 O cruel, there was nothing wild or strange,

Or seeming shameful — for what shame  
 in love,  
 So love be true, and not as yours is —  
 nothing  
 Poor Vivien had not done to win his trust  
 Who call'd her what he call'd her — all  
 her crime,  
 All — all — the wish to prove him wholly  
 hers.'

She mused a little, and then clapt her  
 hands  
 Together with a wailing shriek, and said:  
 'Stabb'd through the heart's affections to  
 the heart!  
 Seethed like the kid in its own mother's  
 milk!  
 Kill'd with a word worse than a life of  
 blows!  
 I thought that he was gentle, being great:  
 O God, that I had loved a smaller man!  
 I should have found in him a greater  
 heart.  
 O, I, that flattering my true passion, saw  
 The knights, the court, the King, dark  
 in your light,  
 Who loved to make men darker than they  
 are,  
 Because of that high pleasure which I  
 had  
 To seat you sole upon my pedestal  
 Of worship — I am answer'd, and hence-  
 forth  
 The course of life that seem'd so flowery  
 to me  
 With you for guide and master, only you,  
 Becomes the sea-cliff pathway broken  
 short,  
 And ending in a ruin — nothing left,  
 But into some low cave to crawl, and  
 there,  
 If the wolf spare me, weep my life away,  
 Kill'd with inutterable unkindliness.'

She paused, she turn'd away, she hung  
 her head,  
 The snake of gold slid from her hair, the  
 braid  
 Slipt and uncoil'd itself, she wept afresh,  
 And the dark wood grew darker toward  
 the storm  
 In silence, while his anger slowly died  
 Within him, till he let his wisdom go

For ease of heart, and half believed her true:

Call'd her to shelter in the hollow oak,  
'Come from the storm,' and having no reply,

Gazed at the heaving shoulder, and the face

Hand-hidden, as for utmost grief or shame;

Then thrice essay'd, by tenderest-touching terms,

To seek her ruffled peace of mind, in vain.

At last she let herself be conquer'd by him,

And as the cageling newly flown returns,  
The seeming-injured simple-hearted thing  
Came to her old perch back, and settled there.

There while she sat, half-falling from his knees,

Half-nestled at his heart, and since he saw

The slow tear creep from her closed eyelid yet,

About her, more in kindness than in love,  
The gentle wizard cast a shielding arm.  
But she dislink'd herself at once and rose,  
Her arms upon her breast across, and stood,

A virtuous gentlewoman deeply wrong'd,  
Upright and flush'd before him: then she said:

'There must be now no passages of love  
Betwixt us twain henceforward evermore;  
Since, if I be what I am grossly call'd,  
What should be granted which your own  
gross heart  
Would reckon worth the taking? I will go.

In truth, but one thing now—better have died

Thrice than have ask'd it once—could make me stay—

That proof of trust—so often ask'd in vain!

How justly, after that vile term of yours,  
I find with grief! I might believe you then,

Who knows? once more. Lo! what was once to me

Mere matter of the fancy, now hath grown

The vast necessity of heart and life.

Farewell; think gently of me, for I fear  
My fate or folly, passing gayer youth  
For one so old, must be to love thee still.

But ere I leave thee let me swear once more

That if I schemed against thy peace in this,

May yon just heaven, that darkens o'er me, send

One flash, that, missing all things else, may make

My scheming brain a cinder, if I lie.'

Scarce had she ceased, when out of heaven a bolt

(For now the storm was close above them) struck,

Furrowing a giant oak, and javelining  
With darted spikes and splinters of the wood

The dark earth round. He raised his eyes and saw

The tree that shone white-listed thro' the gloom.

But Vivien, fearing heaven had heard her oath,

And dazzled by the livid-flickering fork,  
And deafen'd with the stammering cracks and claps

That follow'd, flying back and crying out,  
'O Merlin, tho' you do not love me, save,  
Yet save me!' clung to him and hugg'd him close;

And call'd him dear protector in her fright,

Nor yet forgot her practice in her fright,  
But wrought upon his mood and hugg'd him close.

The pale blood of the wizard at her touch

Took gayer colours, like an opal warm'd.  
She blamed herself for telling hearsay tales:

She shook from fear, and for her fault she wept

Of petulancy; she call'd him lord and liege,

Her seer, her bard, her silver star of eve,  
Her God, her Merlin, the one passionate love

Of her whole life; and ever overhead



Bellow'd the tempest, and the rotten  
 branch  
 Snapt in the rushing of the river-rain  
 Above them; and in change of glare  
 and gloom  
 Her eyes and neck glittering went and  
 came;  
 Till now the storm, its burst of passion  
 spent,  
 Moaning and calling out of other lands,  
 Had left the ravaged woodland yet once  
 more  
 To peace; and what should not have  
 been had been,  
 For Merlin, overtalk'd and overworn,  
 Had yielded, told her all the charm, and  
 slept.

Then, in one moment, she put forth  
 the charm  
 Of woven paces and of waving hands,  
 And in the hollow oak he lay as dead,  
 And lost to life and use and name and  
 fame.

Then crying 'I have made his glory  
 mine,'  
 And shrieking out 'O fool!' the harlot  
 leapt  
 Adown the forest, and the thicket closed  
 Behind her, and the forest echo'd 'fool.'

#### LANCELOT AND ELAINE.

ELAINE the fair, Elaine the lovable,  
 Elaine, the lily maid of Astolat,  
 High in her chamber up a tower to the  
 east  
 Guarded the sacred shield of Lancelot;  
 Which first she placed where morning's  
 earliest ray  
 Might strike it, and awake her with the  
 gleam;  
 Then fearing rust or soilure fashion'd for  
 it  
 A case of silk, and braided thereupon  
 All the devices blazon'd on the shield  
 In their own tinct, and added, of her wit,  
 A border fantasy of branch and flower,  
 And yellow-throated nestling in the nest.  
 Nor rested thus content, but day by day,  
 Leaving her household and good father,  
 climb'd

That eastern tower, and entering barr'd  
 her door,  
 Stript off the case, and read the naked  
 shield,  
 Now guess'd a hidden meaning in his  
 arms,  
 Now made a pretty history to herself  
 Of every dint a sword had beaten in it,  
 And every scratch a lance had made  
 upon it,  
 Conjecturing when and where: this cut  
 is fresh;  
 That ten years back; this dealt him at  
 Caerlyle;  
 That at Caerleon; this at Camelot:  
 And ah God's mercy, what a stroke was  
 there!  
 And here a thrust that might have kill'd,  
 but God  
 Broke the strong lance, and roll'd his  
 enemy down,  
 And saved him: so she lived in fantasy.

How came the lily maid by that good  
 shield  
 Of Lancelot, she that knew not ev'n his  
 name?  
 He left it with her, when he rode to tilt  
 For the great diamond in the diamond  
 jousts,  
 Which Arthur had ordain'd, and by that  
 name  
 Had named them, since a diamond was  
 the prize.

For Arthur, long before they crown'd  
 him King,  
 Roving the trackless realms of Lyo-  
 nesse,  
 Had found a glen, gray boulder and  
 black tarn.  
 A horror lived about the tarn, and clave  
 Like its own mists to all the mountain  
 side:  
 For here two brothers, one a king, had  
 met  
 And fought together; but their names  
 were lost;  
 And each had slain his brother at a blow;  
 And down they fell and made the glen  
 abhorr'd:  
 And there they lay till all their bones  
 were bleach'd,



And lichen'd into colour with the crags:  
 And he, that once was king, had on a  
 crown  
 Of diamonds, one in front, and four  
 aside.  
 And Arthur came, and labouring up the  
 pass,  
 All in a misty moonshine, unawares  
 Had trodden that crown'd skeleton, and  
 the skull  
 Brake from the nape, and from the skull  
 the crown  
 Roll'd into light, and turning on its rims  
 Fled like a glittering rivulet to the  
 tarn:  
 And down the shingly scaur he plunged,  
 and caught,  
 And set it on his head, and in his heart  
 Heard murmurs, 'Lo, thou likewise shalt  
 be King.'

Thereafter, when a King, he had the  
 gems  
 Pluck'd from the crown, and show'd  
 them to his knights,  
 Saying, 'These jewels, whereupon I  
 chanced  
 Divinely, are the kingdom's, not the  
 King's—  
 For public use: henceforward let there  
 be,  
 Once every year, a joust for one of these:  
 For so by nine years' proof we needs  
 must learn  
 Which is our mightiest, and ourselves  
 shall grow  
 In use of arms and manhood, till we  
 drive  
 The heathen, who, some say, shall rule  
 the land  
 Hereafter, which God hinder.' Thus he  
 spoke:  
 And eight years past, eight jousts had  
 been, and still  
 Had Lancelot won the diamond of the  
 year,  
 With purpose to present them to the  
 Queen,  
 When all were won; but meaning all at  
 once  
 To snare her royal fancy with a boon  
 Worth half her realm, had never spoken  
 word.

Now for the central diamond and the  
 last  
 And largest, Arthur, holding then his  
 court  
 Hard on the river nigh the place which  
 now  
 Is this world's hugest, let proclaim a joust  
 At Camelot, and when the time drew nigh  
 Spake (for she had been sick) to Guine-  
 vere,  
 'Are you so sick, my Queen, you cannot  
 move  
 To these fair jousts?' 'Yea, lord,' she  
 said, 'ye know it.'  
 'Then will ye miss,' he answer'd, 'the  
 great deeds  
 Of Lancelot, and his prowess in the lists,  
 A sight ye love to look on.' And the  
 Queen  
 Lifted her eyes, and they dwelt languidly  
 On Lancelot, where he stood beside the  
 King.  
 He thinking that he read her meaning  
 there,  
 'Stay with me, I am sick; my love is  
 more  
 Than many diamonds,' yielded; and a  
 heart  
 Love-loyal to the least wish of the Queen  
 (However much he yearn'd to make  
 complete  
 The tale of diamonds for his destined  
 boon)  
 Urged him to speak against the truth,  
 and say,  
 'Sir King, mine ancient wound is hardly  
 whole,  
 And lets me from the saddle;' and the  
 King  
 Glanced first at him, then her, and went  
 his way.  
 No sooner gone than suddenly she began:  
 'To blame, my lord Sir Lancelot,  
 much to blame!  
 Why go ye not to these fair jousts? the  
 knights  
 Are half of them our enemies, and the  
 crowd  
 Will murmur, "Lo the shameless ones,  
 who take  
 Their pastime now the trustful King is  
 gone!"'

Then Lancelot vext at having lied in  
vain :

'Are ye so wise? ye were not once so  
wise,

My Queen, that summer, when ye loved  
me first.

Then of the crowd ye took no more  
account

Than of the myriad cricket of the mead,  
When its own voice clings to each blade  
of grass,

And every voice is nothing. As to  
knights,

Them surely can I silence with all ease.

But now my loyal worship is allow'd

Of all men : many a bard, without offence,

Has link'd our names together in his lay,

Lancelot, the flower of bravery, Guine-  
vere,

The pearl of beauty : and our knights at  
feast

Have pledged us in this union, while the  
King

Would listen smiling. How then? is  
there more?

Has Arthur spoken aught? or would  
yourself,

Now weary of my service and devoir,

Henceforth be truer to your faultless  
lord?'

She broke into a little scornful laugh :

'Arthur, my lord, Arthur, the faultless  
King,

That passionate perfection, my good  
lord —

But who can gaze upon the Sun in heaven?

He never spake word of reproach to me,

He never had a glimpse of mine untruth,

He cares not for me : only here to-day

There gleam'd a vague suspicion in his  
eyes :

Some meddling rogue has tamper'd with  
him — else

Rapt in this fancy of his Table Round,

And swearing men to vows impossible,

To make them like himself : but, friend,  
to me

He is all fault who hath no fault at all :

For who loves me must have a touch of  
earth ;

The low sun makes the colour : I am  
yours,

Not Arthur's, as ye know, save by the  
bond.

And therefore hear my words : go to the  
jousts :

The tiny-trumpeting gnat can break our  
dream

When sweetest ; and the vermin voices  
here

May buzz so loud — we scorn them, but  
they sting.'

Then answer'd Lancelot, the chief of  
knights :

'And with what face, after my pretext  
made,

Shall I appear, O Queen, at Camelot, I  
Before a King who honours his own

word,  
As if it were his God's?'

'Yea,' said the Queen,

'A moral child without the craft to rule,  
Else had he not lost me : but listen to me,

If I must find you wit : we hear it said  
That men go down before your spear at  
a touch,

But knowing you are Lancelot ; your  
great name,

This conquers : hide it therefore ; go  
unknown :

Win ! by this kiss you will : and our true  
King

Will then allow your pretext, O my  
knight,

As all for glory ; for to speak him true,  
Ye know right well, how meek soe'er he  
seem,

No keener hunter after glory breathes.  
He loves it in his knights more than  
himself :

They prove to him his work : win and  
return.'

Then got Sir Lancelot suddenly to  
horse,

Wroth at himself. Not willing to be  
known,

He left the barren-beaten thoroughfare,  
Chose the green path that show'd the  
rarer foot,

And there among the solitary downs,  
Full often lost in fancy, lost his way ;

Till as he traced a faintly-shadow'd track,

That all in loops and links among the  
dales  
Ran to the Castle of Astolat, he saw  
Fired from the west, far on a hill, the  
towers.  
Thither he made, and blew the gateway  
horn.  
Then came an old, dumb, myriad-  
wrinkled man,  
Who let him into lodging and disarm'd.  
And Lancelot marvell'd at the wordless  
man;  
And issuing found the Lord of Astolat  
With two strong sons, Sir Torre and Sir  
Lavaine,  
Moving to meet him in the castle court;  
And close behind them stept the lily  
maid  
Elaine, his daughter: mother of the house  
There was not: some light jest among  
them rose  
With laughter dying down as the great  
knight  
Approach'd them: then the Lord of  
Astolat:  
'Whence comest thou, my guest, and by  
what name  
Livest between the lips? for by thy state  
And presence I might guess thee chief of  
those,  
After the King, who eat in Arthur's halls.  
Him have I seen: the rest, his Table  
Round,  
Known as they are, to me they are un-  
known.'

Then answer'd Lancelot, the chief of  
knights:  
'Known am I, and of Arthur's hall, and  
known,  
What I by mere mischance have brought,  
my shield.  
But since I go to joust as one unknown  
At Camelot for the diamond, ask me not,  
Hereafter ye shall know me — and the  
shield —  
I pray you lend me one, if such you have,  
Blank, or at least with some device not  
mine.'

Then said the Lord of Astolat, 'Here  
is Torre's:  
Hurt in his first tilt was my son, Sir Torre.

And so, God wot, his shield is blank  
enough.  
His ye can have.' Then added plain Sir  
Torre,  
'Yea, since I cannot use it, ye may have  
it.'  
Here laugh'd the father saying, 'Fie, Sir  
Churl,  
Is that an answer for a noble knight?  
Allow him! but Lavaine, my younger  
here,  
He is so full of lustihood, he will ride,  
Joust for it, and win, and bring it in an  
hour,  
And set it in this damsel's golden hair,  
To make her thrice as wilful as before.'

'Nay, father, nay, good father, shame  
me not  
Before this noble knight,' said young  
Lavaine,  
'For nothing. Surely I but play'd on  
Torre:  
He seem'd so sullen, vext he could not go:  
A jest, no more! for, knight, the maiden  
dreamt  
That some one put this diamond in her  
hand,  
And that it was too slippery to be held,  
And slipt and fell into some pool or  
stream,  
The castle-well, belike; and then I said  
That *if* I went and *if* I fought and won it  
(But all was jest and joke among our-  
selves)  
Then must she keep it safelier. All was  
jest.  
But, father, give me leave, an if he will,  
To ride to Camelot with this noble knight:  
Win shall I not, but do my best to win:  
Young as I am, yet would I do my best.'

'So ye will grace me,' answer'd  
Lancelot,  
Smiling a moment, 'with your fellowship  
O'er these waste downs whereon I lost  
myself,  
Then were I glad of you as guide and  
friend:  
And you shall win this diamond, — as I  
hear  
It is a fair large diamond, — if ye may,  
And yield it to this maiden, if ye will.'

'A fair large diamond,' added plain Sir  
Torre,  
'Such be for queens, and not for simple  
maids.'  
Then she, who held her eyes upon the  
ground,  
Elaine, and heard her name so tost about,  
Flush'd slightly at the slight disparage-  
ment  
Before the stranger knight, who, looking  
at her,  
Full courtly, yet not falsely, thus return'd:  
'If what is fair be but for what is fair,  
And only queens are to be counted so,  
Rash were my judgment then, who deem  
this maid  
Might wear as fair a jewel as is on earth,  
Not violating the bond of like to like.'

He spoke and ceased: the lily maid  
Elaine,  
Won by the mellow voice before she  
look'd,  
Lifted her eyes, and read his lineaments.  
The great and guilty love he bare the  
Queen,  
In battle with the love he bare his lord,  
Had marr'd his face, and mark'd it ere  
his time.  
Another sinning on such heights with one,  
The flower of all the west and all the  
world,  
Had been the sleeker for it: but in him  
His mood was often like a fiend, and  
rose  
And drove him into wastes and solitudes  
For agony, who was yet a living soul.  
Marr'd as he was, he seem'd the goodliest  
man  
That ever among ladies ate in hall,  
And noblest, when she lifted up her eyes.  
However marr'd, of more than twice her  
years,  
Seam'd with an ancient swordcut on the  
cheek,  
And bruised and bronzed, she lifted up  
her eyes  
And loved him, with that love which was  
her doom.

Then the great knight, the darling of  
the court,  
Loved of the loveliest, into that rude hall

Stept with all grace, and not with half  
disdain  
Hid under grace, as in a smaller time,  
But kindly man moving among his kind:  
Whom they with meats and vintage of  
their best  
And talk and minstrel melody entertain'd.  
And much they ask'd of court and Table  
Round,  
And ever well and readily answer'd he:  
But Lancelot, when they glanced at  
Guinevere,  
Suddenly speaking of the wordless man,  
Heard from the Baron that, ten years  
before,  
The heathen caught and reft him of his  
tongue.  
'He learnt and warn'd me of their fierce  
design  
Against my house, and him they caught  
and maim'd;  
But I, my sons, and little daughter fled  
From bonds or death, and dwelt among  
the woods  
By the great river in a boatman's hut.  
Dull days were those, till our good Arthur  
broke  
The Pagan yet once more on Badon hill.'

'O there, great lord, doubtless,' Lavaine  
said, rapt  
By all the sweet and sudden passion of  
youth  
Toward greatness in its elder, 'you have  
fought.  
O tell us — for we live apart — you know  
Of Arthur's glorious wars.' And Lancelot  
spoke  
And answer'd him at full, as having been  
With Arthur in the fight which all day  
long  
Rang by the white mouth of the violent  
Glem;  
And in the four loud battles by the shore  
Of Duglas; that on Bassa; then the war  
That thunder'd in and out the gloomy  
skirts  
Of Celidon the forest; and again  
By castle Gurnion, where the glorious  
King  
Had on his cuirass worn our Lady's  
Head,  
Carv'd of one emerald centr'd in a sun

Of silver rays, that lighten'd as he  
breathed;  
And at Caerleon had he help'd his lord,  
When the strong neighings of the wild  
white Horse  
Set every gilded parapet shuddering;  
And up in Agned-Cathregonion too,  
And down the waste sand-shores of Trath  
Treroit,  
Where many a heathen fell; 'and on the  
mount  
Of Badon I myself beheld the King  
Charge at the head of all his Table Round,  
And all his legions crying Christ and him,  
And break them; and I saw him, after,  
stand  
High on a heap of slain, from spur to  
plume  
Red as the rising sun with heathen blood,  
And seeing me, with a great voice he  
cried,  
"They are broken, they are broken!"  
for the King,  
However mild he seems at home, nor  
cares  
For triumph in our mimic wars, the  
jousts —  
For if his own knight cast him down, he  
laughs  
Saying, his knights are better men than  
he —  
Yet in this heathen war the fire of God  
Fills him: I never saw his like: there lives  
No greater leader.'

While he utter'd this,  
Low to her own heart said the lily maid,  
'Save your great self, fair lord; ' and  
when he fell  
From talk of war to traits of pleasantry —  
Being mirthful he, but in a stately kind —  
She still took note that when the living  
smile  
Died from his lips, across him came a  
cloud  
Of melancholy severe, from which again,  
Whenever in her hovering to and fro  
The lily maid had striven to make him  
cheer,  
There brake a sudden-beaming tenderness  
Of manners and of nature: and she  
thought  
That all was nature, all, perchance, for her.

And all night long his face before her  
lived,  
As when a painter, poring on a face,  
Divinely thro' all hindrance finds the man  
Behind it, and so paints him that his face,  
The shape and colour of a mind and life,  
Lives for his children, ever at its best  
And fullest; so the face before her lived,  
Dark-splendid, speaking in the silence,  
full  
Of noble things, and held her from her  
sleep.  
Till rathe she rose, half-cheated in the  
thought  
She needs must bid farewell to sweet  
Lavaine.  
First as in fear, step after step, she stole  
Down the long tower-stairs, hesitating:  
Anon, she heard Sir Lancelot cry in the  
court,  
'This shield, my friend, where is it?' and  
Lavaine  
Past inward, as she came from out the  
tower.  
There to his proud horse Lancelot turn'd,  
and smooth'd  
The glossy shoulder, humming to himself.  
Half-jealous of the flattering hand, she  
drew  
Nearer and stood. He look'd, and more  
amazed  
Than if seven men had set upon him, saw  
The maiden standing in the dewy light.  
He had not dream'd she was so beautiful.  
Then came on him a sort of sacred fear,  
For silent, tho' he greeted her, she stood  
Rapt on his face as if it were a God's.  
Suddenly flash'd on her a wild desire,  
That he should wear her favour at the tilt.  
She braved a riotous heart in asking for it.  
'Fair lord, whose name I know not —  
noble it is,  
I well believe, the noblest — will you wear  
My favour at this tourney?' 'Nay,' said  
he,  
'Fair lady, since I never yet have worn  
Favour of any lady in the lists.  
Such is my wont, as those, who know me,  
know.'  
'Yea, so,' she answer'd; 'then in wearing  
mine  
Needs must be lesser likelihood, noble  
lord,

That those who know should know you.  
 And he turn'd  
 Her counsel up and down within his mind,  
 And found it true, and answer'd, 'True,  
 my child.  
 Well, I will wear it: fetch it out to me:  
 What is it?' and she told him 'A red  
 sleeve  
 Broider'd with pearls,' and brought it:  
 then he bound  
 Her token on his helmet, with a smile  
 Saying, 'I never yet have done so much  
 For any maiden living,' and the blood  
 Sprang to her face and fill'd her with  
 delight;  
 But left her all the paler, when Lavaine  
 Returning brought the yet-unblazon'd  
 shield,  
 His brother's; which he gave to Lancelot,  
 Who parted with his own to fair Elaine:  
 'Do me this grace, my child, to have my  
 shield  
 In keeping till I come.' 'A grace to me,'  
 She answer'd, 'twice to-day. I am your  
 squire!'  
 Whereat Lavaine said, laughing, 'Lily  
 maid,  
 For fear our people call you lily maid  
 In earnest, let me bring your colour back;  
 Once, twice, and thrice: now get you  
 hence to bed.'  
 So kiss'd her, and Sir Lancelot his own  
 hand,  
 And thus they moved away: she stay'd  
 a minute,  
 Then made a sudden step to the gate,  
 and there —  
 Her bright hair blown about the serious  
 face  
 Yet rosy-kindled with her brother's kiss —  
 Paused by the gateway, standing near  
 the shield  
 In silence, while she watch'd their arms  
 far-off  
 Sparkle, until they dipt below the downs.  
 Then to her tower she climb'd, and took  
 the shield,  
 There kept it, and so lived in fantasy.

Meanwhile the new companions past  
 away  
 Far o'er the long backs of the bushless  
 downs,

To where Sir Lancelot knew there lived  
 a knight  
 Not far from Camelot, now for forty years  
 A hermit, who had pray'd, labour'd and  
 pray'd,  
 And ever labouring had scoop'd himself  
 In the white rock a chapel and a hall  
 On massive columns, like a shorecliff cave,  
 And cells and chambers: all were fair  
 and dry;  
 The green light from the meadows under-  
 neath  
 Struck up and lived along the milky roofs;  
 And in the meadows tremulous aspen-trees  
 And poplars made a noise of falling  
 showers.  
 And thither wending there that night they  
 bode.

But when the next day broke from  
 underground,  
 And shot red fire and shadows thro' the  
 cave,  
 They rose, heard mass, broke fast, and  
 rode away:  
 Then Lancelot saying, 'Hear, but hold  
 my name  
 Hidden, you ride with Lancelot of the  
 Lake,'  
 Abash'd Lavaine, whose instant rever-  
 ence,  
 Dearer to true young hearts than their  
 own praise,  
 But left him leave to stammer, 'Is it  
 indeed?'  
 And after muttering 'The great Lancelot,'  
 At last he got his breath and answer'd,  
 'One,  
 One have I seen — that other, our liege  
 lord,  
 The dread Pendragon, Britain's King of  
 kings,  
 Of whom the people talk mysteriously,  
 He will be there — then were I stricken  
 blind  
 That minute, I might say that I had seen.'

So spake Lavaine, and when they  
 reach'd the lists  
 By Camelot in the meadow, let his eyes  
 Run thro' the peopled gallery which half  
 round  
 Lay like a rainbow fall'n upon the grass,



Until they found the clear-faced King,  
 who sat  
 Robed in red samite, easily to be known,  
 Since to his crown the golden dragon  
 clung,  
 And down his robe the dragon writhed  
 in gold,  
 And from the carven-work behind him  
 crept  
 Two dragons gilded, sloping down to  
 make  
 Arms for his chair, while all the rest of  
 them  
 Thro' knots and loops and folds innum-  
 erable  
 Fled ever thro' the woodwork, till they  
 found  
 The new design wherein they lost them-  
 selves,  
 Yet with all ease, so tender was the  
 work :  
 And, in the costly canopy o'er him set,  
 Blazed the last diamond of the nameless  
 king.

Then Lancelot answer'd young Lavaine  
 and said,  
 'Me you call great: mine is the firmer  
 seat,  
 The truer lance: but there is many a youth  
 Now crescent, who will come to all I am  
 And overcome it; and in me there dwells  
 No greatness, save it be some far-off touch  
 Of greatness to know well I am not great :  
 There is the man.' And Lavaine gaped  
 upon him  
 As on a thing miraculous, and anon  
 The trumpets blew; and then did either  
 side,  
 They that assail'd, and they that held the  
 lists,  
 Set lance in rest, strike spur, suddenly  
 move,  
 Meet in the midst, and there so furiously  
 Shock, that a man far-off might well  
 perceive,  
 If any man that day were left afield,  
 The hard earth shake, and a low thunder  
 of arms.  
 And Lancelot bode a little, till he saw  
 Which were the weaker; then he hurl'd  
 into it  
 Against the stronger: little need to speak

Of Lancelot in his glory! King, duke,  
 earl,  
 Count, baron — whom he smote, he over-  
 threw.

But in the field were Lancelot's kith  
 and kin,  
 Ranged with the Table Round that held  
 the lists,  
 Strong men, and wrathful that a stranger  
 knight  
 Should do and almost overdo the deeds  
 Of Lancelot; and one said to the other,  
 'Lo!  
 What is he? I do not mean the force  
 alone —  
 The grace and versatility of the man!  
 Is it not Lancelot?' 'When has Lance-  
 lot worn  
 Favour of any lady in the lists?  
 Not such his wont, as we, that know him,  
 know.'  
 'How then? who then?' a fury seized  
 them all,  
 A fiery family passion for the name  
 Of Lancelot, and a glory one with theirs.  
 They couch'd their spears and prick'd  
 their steeds, and thus,  
 Their plumes driv'n backward by the wind  
 they made  
 In moving, all together down upon him  
 Bare, as a wild wave in the wide North-  
 sea,  
 Green-glimmering toward the summit,  
 bears, with all  
 Its stormy crests that smoke against the  
 skies,  
 Down on a bark, and overbears the bark,  
 And him that helms it, so they overbore  
 Sir Lancelot and his charger, and a spear  
 Down-glancing lamed the charger, and a  
 spear  
 Prick'd sharply his own cuirass, and the  
 head  
 Pierced thro' his side, and there snapt,  
 and remain'd.

Then Sir Lavaine did well and wor-  
 shipfully;  
 He bore a knight of old repute to the  
 earth,  
 And brought his horse to Lancelot where  
 he lay.

He up the side, sweating with agony, got,  
 But thought to do while he might yet  
 endure,  
 And being lustily holpen by the rest,  
 His party, — tho' it seem'd half-miracle  
 To those he fought with, — drave his kith  
 and kin,  
 And all the Table Round that held the  
 lists,  
 Back to the barrier; then the trumpets  
 blew  
 Proclaiming his the prize, who wore the  
 sleeve  
 Of scarlet, and the pearls; and all the  
 knights,  
 His party, cried, 'Advance and take thy  
 prize  
 The diamond;' but he answer'd, 'Diamond  
 me  
 No diamonds! for God's love, a little air!  
 Prize me no prizes, for my prize is death!  
 Hence will I, and I charge you, follow  
 me not.'

He spoke, and vanish'd suddenly from  
 the field  
 With young Lavaine into the poplar  
 grove.  
 There from his charger down he slid, and  
 sat,  
 Gasping to Sir Lavaine, 'Draw the lance-  
 head: '  
 'Ah my sweet lord Sir Lancelot,' said  
 Lavaine,  
 'I dread me, if I draw it, you will die.'  
 But he, 'I die already with it: draw —  
 Draw,' — and Lavaine drew, and Sir  
 Lancelot gave  
 A marvellous great shriek and ghastly  
 groan,  
 And half his blood burst forth, and down  
 he sank  
 For the pure pain, and wholly swoon'd  
 away.  
 Then came the hermit out and bare him  
 in,  
 There stanch'd his wound; and there, in  
 daily doubt  
 Whether to live or die, for many a week  
 Hid from the wide world's rumour by the  
 grove  
 Of poplars with their noise of falling  
 showers,

And ever-tremulous aspen-trees, lie lay.

But on that day when Lancelot fled the  
 lists,  
 His party, knights of utmost North and  
 West,  
 Lords of waste marches, kings of desolate  
 isles,  
 Came round their great Pendragon, saying  
 to him,  
 'Lo, Sire, our knight, thro' whom we  
 won the day,  
 Hath gone sore wounded, and hath left  
 his prize  
 Untaken, crying that his prize is death.'  
 'Heaven hinder,' said the King, 'that  
 such an one,  
 So great a knight as we have seen to-day —  
 He seem'd to me another Lancelot —  
 Yea, twenty times I thought him Lance-  
 lot —  
 He must not pass uncared for. Where-  
 fore, rise,  
 O Gawain, and ride forth and find the  
 knight.  
 Wounded and wearied needs must he be  
 near.  
 I charge you that you get at once to horse.  
 And, knights and kings, there breathes  
 not one of you  
 Will deem this prize of ours is rashly  
 given:  
 His prowess was too wondrous. We will  
 do him  
 No customary honour: since the knight  
 Came not to us, of us to claim the prize,  
 Ourselves will send it after. Rise and  
 take  
 This diamond, and deliver it, and return,  
 And bring us where he is, and how he  
 fares,  
 And cease not from your quest until ye  
 find.'

So saying, from the carven flower above,  
 To which it made a restless heart, he  
 took,  
 And gave, the diamond: then from where  
 he sat  
 At Arthur's right, with smiling face arose,  
 With smiling face and frowning heart, a  
 Prince  
 In the mid might and flourish of his May,

Gawain, surnamed The Courteous, fair  
and strong,  
And after Lancelot, Tristram, and  
Geraint  
And Gareth, a good knight, but there-  
withal  
Sir Modred's brother, and the child of  
Lot,  
Nor often loyal to his word, and now  
Wroth that the King's command to sally  
forth  
In quest of whom he knew not, made him  
leave  
The banquet, and concourse of knights  
and kings.

So all in wrath he got to horse and  
went;  
While Arthur to the banquet, dark in  
mood,  
Past, thinking, 'Is it Lancelot who hath  
come  
Despite the wound he spake of, all for  
gain  
Of glory, and hath added wound to  
wound,  
And ridd'n away to die?' So fear'd the  
King,  
And, after two days' tarriance there,  
return'd.  
Then when he saw the Queen, embrac-  
ing ask'd,  
'Love, are you yet so sick?' 'Nay,  
lord,' she said.  
'And where is Lancelot?' Then the  
Queen amazed,  
'Was he not with you? won he not your  
prize?'  
'Nay, but one like him.' 'Why that like  
was he.'  
And when the King demanded how she  
knew,  
Said, 'Lord, no sooner had ye parted  
from us,  
Than Lancelot told me of a common talk  
That men went down before his spear at  
a touch,  
But knowing he was Lancelot; his great  
name  
Conquer'd; and therefore would he hide  
his name  
From all men, ev'n the King, and to this  
end

Had made the pretext of a hindering  
wound,  
That he might joust unknown of all, and  
learn  
If his old prowess were in aught decay'd;  
And added, "Our true Arthur, when he  
learns,  
Will well allow my pretext, as for gain  
Of purer glory."

Then replied the King:  
'Far lovelier in our Lancelot had it been,  
In lieu of idly dallying with the truth,  
To have trusted me as he hath trusted thee.  
Surely his King and most familiar friend  
Might well have kept his secret. True,  
indeed,  
Albeit I know my knights fantastical,  
So fine a fear in our large Lancelot  
Must needs have moved my laughter:  
now remains  
But little cause for laughter: his own  
kin—  
Ill news, my Queen, for all who love him,  
this!—  
His kith and kin, not knowing, set upon  
him;  
So that he went sore wounded from the  
field:  
Yet good news too: for goodly hopes are  
mine  
That Lancelot is no more a lonely heart.  
He wore, against his wont, upon his helm  
A sleeve of scarlet, broider'd with great  
pearls,  
Some gentle maiden's gift.'

'Yea, lord,' she said,  
'Thy hopes are mine,' and saying that,  
she choked,  
And sharply turn'd about to hide her face,  
Past to her chamber, and there flung  
herself  
Down on the great King's couch, and  
writhed upon it,  
And clench'd her fingers till they bit the  
palm,  
And shriek'd out 'Traitor' to the un-  
hearing wall,  
Then flash'd into wild tears, and rose  
again,  
And moved about her palace, proud and  
pale.

Gawain the while thro' all the region  
 round  
 Rode with his diamond, wearied of the  
 quest,  
 Touch'd at all points, except the poplar  
 grove,  
 And came at last, tho' late, to Astolat:  
 Whom glittering in enamell'd arms the  
 maid  
 Glanced at, and cried, 'What news from  
 Camelot, lord?  
 What of the knight with the red sleeve?'  
 'He won.'  
 'I knew it,' she said. 'But parted from  
 the jousts  
 Hurt in the side,' whereat she caught her  
 breath;  
 Thro' her own side she felt the sharp  
 lance go;  
 Thereon she smote her hand: wellnigh  
 she swoon'd:  
 And, while he gazed wonderingly at her,  
 came  
 The Lord of Astolat out, to whom the  
 Prince  
 Reported who he was, and on what  
 quest  
 Sent, that he bore the prize and could  
 not find  
 The victor, but had ridd'n a random  
 round  
 To seek him, and had wearied of the  
 search.  
 To whom the Lord of Astolat, 'Bide  
 with us,  
 And ride no more at random, noble  
 Prince!  
 Here was the knight, and here he left a  
 shield;  
 This will he send or come for: further-  
 more  
 Our son is with him; we shall hear anon,  
 Needs must we hear.' To this the cour-  
 teous Prince  
 Accorded with his wanted courtesy,  
 Courtesy with a touch of traitor in it,  
 And stay'd; and cast his eyes on fair  
 Elaine:  
 Where could be found face daintier?  
 then her shape  
 From forehead down to foot, perfect —  
 again  
 From foot to forehead exquisitely turn'd:

'Well—if I bide, lo! this wild flower  
 for me!'  
 And oft they met among the garden yews,  
 And there he set himself to play upon her  
 With sallying wit, free flashes from a  
 height  
 Above her, graces of the court, and songs,  
 Sighs, and slow smiles, and golden elo-  
 quence  
 And amorous adulation, till the maid  
 Rebell'd against it, saying to him, 'Prince,  
 O loyal nephew of our noble King,  
 Why ask you not to see the shield he left,  
 Whence you might learn his name? Why  
 slight your King,  
 And lose the quest he sent you on, and  
 prove  
 No surer than our falcon yesterday,  
 Who lost the hern we slipt her at, and  
 went  
 To all the winds?' 'Nay, by mine head,'  
 said he,  
 'I lose it, as we lose the lark in heaven,  
 O damsel, in the light of your blue eyes;  
 But an ye will it let me see the shield.'  
 And when the shield was brought, and  
 Gawain saw  
 Sir Lancelot's azure lions, crown'd with  
 gold,  
 Ramp in the field, he smote his thigh,  
 and mock'd:  
 'Right was the King! our Lancelot!  
 that true man!'  
 'And right was I,' she answer'd merrily,  
 'I,  
 Who dream'd my knight the greatest  
 knight of all.'  
 'And if I dream'd,' said Gawain, 'that  
 you love  
 This greatest knight, your pardon! lo,  
 ye know it!  
 Speak therefore: shall I waste myself in  
 vain?'  
 Full simple was her answer, 'What know  
 I?  
 My brethren have been all my fellow-  
 ship;  
 And I, when often they have talk'd of  
 love,  
 Wish'd it had been my mother, for they  
 talk'd,  
 Meseem'd, of what they knew not; so  
 myself —

I know not if I know what true love is,  
 But if I know, then, if I love not him,  
 I know there is none other I can love.'  
 'Yea, by God's death,' said he, 'ye love  
 him well,  
 But would not, knew ye what all others  
 know,  
 And whom he loves.' 'So be it,' cried  
 Elaine,  
 And lifted her fair face and moved away:  
 But he pursued her, calling, 'Stay a  
 little!  
 One golden minute's grace! he wore  
 your sleeve:  
 Would he break faith with one I may not  
 name?  
 Must our true man change like a leaf at  
 last?  
 Nay—like enow: why then, far be it  
 from me  
 To cross our mighty Lancelot in his  
 loves!  
 And, damsel, for I deem you know full  
 well  
 Where your great knight is hidden, let  
 me leave  
 My quest with you; the diamond also:  
 here!  
 For if you love, it will be sweet to  
 give it;  
 And if he love, it will be sweet to  
 have it  
 From your own hand; and whether he  
 love or not,  
 A diamond is a diamond. Fare you well  
 A thousand times!—a thousand times  
 farewell!  
 Yet, if he love, and his love hold, we  
 two  
 May meet at court hereafter: there, I  
 think,  
 So ye will learn the courtesies of the  
 court,  
 We two shall know each other.'

Then he gave,  
 And slightly kiss'd the hand to which he  
 gave,  
 The diamond, and all wearied of the  
 quest  
 Leapt on his horse, and carolling as he  
 went  
 A true-love ballad, lightly rode away.

Thence to the court he past; there told  
 the King  
 What the King knew, 'Sir Lancelot is  
 the knight.'  
 And added, 'Sir, my liege, so much I  
 learnt;  
 But fail'd to find him, tho' I rode all  
 round  
 The region: but I lighted on the maid  
 Whose sleeve he wore; she loves him;  
 and to her,  
 Deeming our courtesy is the truest law,  
 I gave the diamond: she will render it;  
 For by mine head she knows his hiding-  
 place.'

The seldom-frowning King frown'd,  
 and replied,  
 'Too courteous truly! ye shall go no  
 more  
 On quest of mine, seeing that ye forget  
 Obedience is the courtesy due to kings.'

He spake and parted. Wroth, but all  
 in awe,  
 For twenty strokes of the blood, without  
 a word,  
 Linger'd that other, staring after him;  
 Then shook his hair, strode off, and  
 buzz'd abroad  
 About the maid of Astolat, and her love.  
 All ears were prick'd at once, all tongues  
 were loosed:  
 'The maid of Astolat loves Sir Lance-  
 lot,  
 Sir Lancelot loves the maid of Astolat.'  
 Some read the King's face, some the  
 Queen's, and all  
 Had marvel what the maid might be, but  
 most  
 Predoom'd her as unworthy. One old  
 dame  
 Came suddenly on the Queen with the  
 sharp news.  
 She, that had heard the noise of it  
 before,  
 But sorrowing Lancelot should have  
 stoop'd so low,  
 Marr'd her friend's aim with pale tran-  
 quillity.  
 So ran the tale like fire about the court,  
 Fire in dry stubble a nine-days' wonder  
 flared:

Till ev'n the knights at banquet twice or thrice  
 Forgot to drink to Lancelot and the Queen,  
 And pledging Lancelot and the lily maid  
 Smiled at each other, while the Queen, who sat  
 With lips severely placid, felt the knot  
 Climb in her throat, and with her feet unseen  
 Crush'd the wild passion out against the floor  
 Beneath the banquet, where the meats became  
 As wornwood, and she hated all who pledged.

But far away the maid in Astolat,  
 Her guiltless rival, she that ever kept  
 The one-day-seen Sir Lancelot in her heart,  
 Crept to her father, while he mused alone,  
 Sat on his knee, stroked his gray face and said,  
 'Father, you call me wilful, and the fault  
 Is yours who let me have my will, and now,  
 Sweet father, will you let me lose my wits?'  
 'Nay,' said he, 'surely.' 'Wherefore, let me hence,'  
 She answer'd, 'and find out our dear Lavaine.'  
 'Ye will not lose your wits for dear Lavaine:  
 Bide,' answer'd he: 'we needs must hear anon  
 Of him, and of that other.' 'Ay,' she said,  
 'And of that other, for I needs must hence  
 And find that other, wheresoe'er he be,  
 And with mine own hand give his diamond to him,  
 Lest I be found as faithless in the quest  
 As yon proud Prince who left the quest to me.  
 Sweet father, I behold him in my dreams  
 Gaunt as it were the skeleton of himself,  
 Death-pale, for lack of gentle maiden's aid.  
 The gentler-born the maiden, the more bound,  
 My father, to be sweet and serviceable

To noble knights in sickness, as ye know  
 When these have worn their tokens: let me hence  
 I pray you.' Then her father nodding said,  
 'Ay, ay, the diamond: wit ye well, my child,  
 Right fain were I to learn this knight were whole,  
 Being our greatest: yea, and you must give it—  
 And sure I think this fruit is hung too high  
 For any mouth to gape for save a queen's—  
 Nay, I mean nothing: so then, get you gone,  
 Being so very wilful you must go.'

Lightly, her suit allow'd, she slipt away,  
 And while she made her ready for her ride,  
 Her father's latest word humm'd in her ear,  
 'Being so very wilful you must go,'  
 And changed itself and echo'd in her heart,  
 'Being so very wilful you must die.'  
 But she was happy enough and shook it off,  
 As we shake off the bee that buzzes at us;  
 And in her heart she answer'd it and said,  
 'What matter, so I help him back to life?'  
 Then far away with good Sir Torre for guide  
 Rode o'er the long backs of the bushless downs  
 To Camelot, and before the city-gates  
 Came on her brother with a happy face  
 Making a roan horse caper and curvet  
 For pleasure all about a field of flowers:  
 Whom when she saw, 'Lavaine,' she cried, 'Lavaine,  
 How fares my lord Sir Lancelot?' He amazed,  
 'Torre and Elaine! why here? Sir Lancelot!  
 How know ye my lord's name is Lancelot?'  
 But when the maid had told him all her tale,  
 Then turn'd Sir Torre, and being in his moods



Left them, and under the strange-stated  
 gate,  
 Where Arthur's wars were render'd  
 mystically,  
 Past up the still rich city to his kin,  
 His own far blood, which dwelt at  
 Camelot;  
 And her, Lavaine across the poplar grove  
 Led to the caves: there first she saw the  
 casque  
 Of Lancelot on the wall: her scarlet  
 sleeve,  
 Tho' carved and cut, and half the pearls  
 away,  
 Stream'd from it still; and in her heart  
 she laugh'd,  
 Because he had not loosed it from his  
 helm,  
 But meant once more perchance to tour-  
 ney in it.  
 And when they gain'd the cell wherein  
 he slept,  
 His battle-writhen arms and mighty hands  
 Lay naked on the wolfskin, and a dream  
 Of dragging down his enemy made them  
 move.  
 Then she that saw him lying unsleek,  
 unshorn,  
 Gaunt as it were the skeleton of himself,  
 Utter'd a little tender dolorous cry.  
 The sound not wanted in a place so still  
 Woke the sick knight, and while he roll'd  
 his eyes  
 Yet blank from sleep, she started to him,  
 saying,  
 'Your prize the diamond sent you by the  
 King:'  
 His eyes glisten'd: she fancied 'Is it for  
 me?'  
 And when the maid had told him all the  
 tale  
 Of King and Prince, the diamond sent,  
 the quest  
 Assign'd to her not worthy of it, she knelt  
 Full lowly by the corners of his bed,  
 And laid the diamond in his open hand.  
 Her face was near, and as we kiss the  
 child  
 That does the task assign'd, he kiss'd her  
 face.  
 At once she slipt like water to the floor.  
 'Alas,' he said, 'your ride hath wearied  
 you.

Rest must you have.' 'No rest for me,'  
 she said;  
 'Nay, for near you, fair lord, I am at rest.'  
 What might she mean by that? his large  
 black eyes,  
 Yet larger thro' his leanness, dwelt upon  
 her,  
 Till all her heart's sad secret blazed itself  
 In the heart's colours on her simple face;  
 And Lancelot look'd and was perplex in  
 mind,  
 And being weak in body said no more;  
 But did not love the colour; woman's  
 love,  
 Save one, he not regarded, and so turn'd  
 Sighing, and feign'd a sleep until he slept.

Then rose Elaine and glided thro' the  
 fields,  
 And past beneath the weirdly-sculptured  
 gates  
 Far up the dim rich city to her kin;  
 There bode the night: but woke with  
 dawn, and past  
 Down thro' the dim rich city to the fields,  
 Thence to the cave: so day by day she  
 past  
 In either twilight ghost-like to and fro  
 Gliding, and every day she tended him.  
 And likewise many a night: and Lancelot  
 Would, tho' he call'd his wound a little  
 hurt  
 Whereof he should be quickly whole, at  
 times  
 Brain-feverous in his heat and agony,  
 seem  
 Uncourteous, even he: but the meek  
 maid  
 Sweetly forbore him ever, being to him  
 Meeker than any child to a rough nurse,  
 Milder than any mother to a sick child,  
 And never woman yet, since man's first  
 fall,  
 Did kindlier unto man, but her deep love  
 Uphore her; till the hermit, skill'd in all  
 The simples and the science of that time,  
 Told him that her fine care had saved his  
 life.  
 And the sick man forgot her simple blush,  
 Would call her friend and sister, sweet  
 Elaine,  
 Would listen for her coming and regret  
 Her parting-step, and held her tenderly,

And loved her with all love except the  
 love  
 Of man and woman when they love their  
 best,  
 Closest and sweetest, and had died the  
 death  
 In any knightly fashion for her sake.  
 And peradventure had he seen her first  
 She might have made this and that other  
 world  
 Another world for the sick man; but now  
 The shackles of an old love straiten'd him,  
 His honour rooted in dishonour stood,  
 And faith unfaithful kept him falsely true.

Yet the great knight in his mid-sick-  
 ness made  
 Full many a holy vow and pure resolve.  
 These, as but born of sickness, could not  
 live:  
 For when the blood ran lustier in him  
 again,  
 Full often the bright image of one face,  
 Making a treacherous quiet in his heart,  
 Dispersed his resolution like a cloud.  
 Then if the maiden, while that ghostly  
 grace  
 Beam'd on his fancy, spoke, he answer'd  
 not,  
 Or short and coldly, and she knew right  
 well  
 What the rough sickness meant, but what  
 this meant  
 She knew not, and the sorrow dimm'd  
 her sight,  
 And drove her ere her time across the  
 fields  
 Far into the rich city, where alone  
 She murmur'd, 'Vain, in vain: it cannot  
 be.  
 He will not love me: how then? must  
 I die?'  
 Then as a little helpless innocent bird,  
 That has but one plain passage of few  
 notes,  
 Will sing the simple passage o'er and o'er  
 For all an April morning, till the ear  
 Wearies to hear it, so the simple maid  
 Went half the night repeating, 'Must I  
 die?'  
 And now to right she turn'd, and now to  
 left,  
 And found no ease in turning or in rest;

And 'Him or death,' she mutter'd,  
 'death or him,'  
 Again and like a burthen, 'Him or death.'

But when Sir Lancelot's deadly hurt  
 was whole,  
 To Astolat returning rode the three.  
 There morn by morn, arraying her sweet  
 self  
 In that wherein she deem'd she look'd  
 her best,  
 She came before Sir Lancelot, for she  
 thought  
 'If I be loved, these are my festal robes,  
 If not, the victim's flowers before he fall.'  
 And Lancelot ever prest upon the maid  
 That she should ask some goodly gift of  
 him  
 For her own self or hers; 'and do not  
 shun  
 To speak the wish most near to your true  
 heart;  
 Such service have ye done me, that I make  
 My will of yours, and Prince and Lord  
 am I  
 In mine own land, and what I will I can.'  
 Then like a ghost she lifted up her face,  
 But like a ghost without the power to  
 speak.  
 And Lancelot saw that she withheld her  
 wish,  
 And bode among them yet a little space  
 Till he should learn it; and one morn it  
 chanced  
 He found her in among the garden yews,  
 And said, 'Delay no longer, speak your  
 wish,  
 Seeing I go to-day:' then out she brake:  
 'Going? and we shall never see you more.  
 And I must die for want of one bold word.'  
 'Speak: that I live to hear,' he said, 'is  
 yours.'  
 Then suddenly and passionately she  
 spoke:  
 'I have gone mad. I love you: let me  
 die.'  
 'Ah, sister,' answer'd Lancelot, 'what is  
 this?'  
 And innocently extending her white arms,  
 'Your love,' she said, 'your love — to be  
 your wife.'  
 And Lancelot answer'd, 'Had I chosen  
 to wed,

I had been wedded earlier, sweet Elaine:  
But now there never will be wife of mine.'  
'No, no,' she cried, 'I care not to be  
wife,

But to be with you still, to see your face,  
To serve you, and to follow you thro' the  
world.'

And Lancelot answer'd, 'Nay, the world,  
the world,

All ear and eye, with such a stupid heart  
To interpret ear and eye, and such a  
tongue

To blare its own interpretation — nay,  
Full ill then should I quit your brother's  
love,

And your good father's kindness.' And  
she said,

'Not to be with you, not to see your  
face —

Alas for me then, my good days are  
done.'

'Nay, noble maid,' he answer'd, 'ten  
times nay!

This is not love: but love's first flash in  
youth,

Most common: yea, I know it of mine  
own self:

And you yourself will smile at your own  
self

Hereafter, when you yield your flower of  
life

To one more fitly yours, not thrice your  
age:

And then will I, for true you are and  
sweet

Beyond mine old belief in womanhood,  
More specially should your good knight  
be poor,

Endow you with broad land and territory  
Even to the half my realm beyond the  
seas,

So that would make you happy: further-  
more,

Ev'n to the death, as tho' ye were my  
blood,

In all your quarrels will I be your knight.  
This will I do, dear damsel, for your  
sake,

And more than this I cannot.'

While he spoke

She neither blush'd nor shook, but  
deathly-pale

Stood grasping what was nearest, then  
replied:

'Of all this will I nothing;' and so  
fell,

And thus they bore her swooning to her  
tower.

Then spake, to whom thro' those black  
walls of yew

Their talk had pierced, her father: 'Ay,  
a flash,

I fear me, that will strike my blossom  
dead.

Too courteous are ye, fair Lord Lancelot.  
I pray you, use some rough discourtesy  
To blunt or break her passion.'

Lancelot said,

'That were against me: what I can I  
will;'

And there that day remain'd, and toward  
even

Sent for his shield: full meekly rose the  
maid,

Strip off the case, and gave the naked  
shield;

Then, when she heard his horse upon  
the stones,

Unclasping flung the casement back, and  
look'd

Down on his helm, from which her sleeve  
had gone.

And Lancelot knew the little clinking  
sound;

And she by tact of love was well aware  
That Lancelot knew that she was looking  
at him.

And yet he glanced not up, nor waved  
his hand,

Nor bade farewell, but sadly rode away.  
This was the one discourtesy that he  
used.

So in her tower alone the maiden sat:  
His very shield was gone; only the case,  
Her own poor work, her empty labour,  
left.

But still she heard him, still his picture  
form'd

And grew between her and the pictured  
wall.

Then came her father, saying in low  
tones,

'Have comfort,' whom she greeted  
quietly.

Then came her brethren saying, 'Peace  
to thee,

Sweet sister,' whom she answer'd with  
all calm.

But when they left her to herself again,  
Death, like a friend's voice from a distant  
field

Approaching thro' the darkness, call'd;  
the owls

Wailing had power upon her, and she mixt  
Her fancies with the sallow-rifted glooms  
Of evening, and the moanings of the wind.

And in those days she made a little  
song,

And call'd her song 'The Song of Love  
and Death,'

And sang it: sweetly could she make  
and sing.

'Sweet is true love tho' given in vain,  
in vain;

And sweet is death who puts an end to  
pain:

I know not which is sweeter, no, not I.

'Love, art thou sweet? then bitter  
death must be:

Love, thou art bitter; sweet is death to  
me.

O Love, if death be sweeter, let me die.

'Sweet love, that seems not made to  
fade away,

Sweet death, that seems to make us  
loveless clay,

I know not which is sweeter, no, not I.

'I fain would follow love, if that could  
be;

I needs must follow death, who calls for  
me;

Call and I follow, I follow! let me die.'

High with the last line scaled her voice,  
and this,

All in a fiery dawning wild with wind  
That shook her tower, the brothers heard,  
and thought

With shuddering, 'Hark the Phantom of  
the house

That ever shrieks before a death,' and  
call'd

The father, and all three in hurry and  
fear

Ran to her, and lo! the blood-red light  
of dawn

Flared on her face, she shrilling, 'Let  
me die!'

And when we dwell upon a word we  
know,

Repeating, till the word we know so well  
Becomes a wonder, and we know not  
why,

So dwell the father on her face, and  
thought

'Is this Elaine?' till back the maiden  
fell,

Then gave a languid hand to each, and  
lay,

Speaking a still good-morrow with her  
eyes.

At last she said, 'Sweet brothers, yester-  
night

I seem'd a curious little maid again,  
As happy as when we dwelt among the

woods,

And when ye used to take me with the  
flood

Up the great river in the boatman's  
boat.

Only ye would not pass beyond the cape  
That has the poplar on it: there ye fixt

Your limit, oft returning with the tide.  
And yet I cried because ye would not

pass

Beyond it, and far up the shining flood  
Until we found the palace of the King.

And yet ye would not; but this night I  
dream'd

That I was all alone upon the flood,  
And then I said, "Now shall I have my  
will:"

And there I woke, but still the wish  
remain'd.

So let me hence that I may pass at last  
Beyond the poplar and far up the flood,

Until I find the palace of the King.  
There will I enter in among them all,

And no man there will dare to mock at  
me;

But there the fine Gawain will wonder at  
me,

And there the great Sir Lancelot muse  
 at me;  
 Gawain, who bade a thousand farewells to  
 me,  
 Lancelot, who coldly went, nor bade me  
 one:  
 And there the King will know me and  
 my love,  
 And there the Queen herself will pity me,  
 And all the gentle court will welcome me,  
 And after my long voyage I shall rest!’

‘Peace,’ said her father, ‘O my child,  
 ye seem  
 Light-headed, for what force is yours to  
 go  
 So far, being sick? and wherefore would  
 ye look  
 On this proud fellow again, who scorns  
 us all?’

Then the rough Torre began to heave  
 and move,  
 And bluster into stormy sobs and say,  
 ‘I never loved him: an I meet with him,  
 I care not howsoever great he be,  
 Then will I strike at him and strike him  
 down,  
 Give me good fortune, I will strike him  
 dead,  
 For this discomfort he hath done the  
 house.’

To whom the gentle sister made reply,  
 ‘Fret not yourself, dear brother, nor be  
 wroth,  
 Seeing it is no more Sir Lancelot’s fault  
 Not to love me, than it is mine to love  
 Him of all men who seems to me the  
 highest.’

‘Highest?’ the father answer’d, echo-  
 ing ‘highest?’  
 (He meant to break the passion in her)  
 ‘nay,  
 Daughter, I know not what you call the  
 highest;  
 But this I know, for all the people know  
 it,  
 He loves the Queen, and in an open  
 shame:  
 And she returns his love in open shame;  
 If this be high, what is it to be low?’

Then spake the lily maid of Astolat:  
 ‘Sweet father, all too faint and sick am I  
 For anger: these are slanders: never yet  
 Was noble man but made ignoble talk.  
 He makes no friend who never made a  
 foe.

But now it is my glory to have loved  
 One peerless, without stain: so let me  
 pass,

My father, howsoever I seem to you,  
 Not all unhappy, having loved God’s best  
 And greatest, tho’ my love had no return:  
 Yet, seeing you desire your child to live,  
 Thanks, but you work against your own  
 desire;

For if I could believe the things you say  
 I should but die the sooner; wherefore  
 cease,

Sweet father, and bid call the ghostly  
 man

Hither, and let me shrive me clean, and  
 die.’

So when the ghostly man had come and  
 gone,  
 She with a face, bright as for sin forgiven,  
 Besought Lavaine to write as she devised  
 A letter, word for word; and when he  
 ask’d

‘Is it for Lancelot, is it for my dear lord?  
 Then will I bear it gladly;’ she replied,  
 ‘For Lancelot and the Queen and all the  
 world,

But I myself must bear it.’ Then he wrote  
 The letter she devised; which being writ  
 And folded, ‘O sweet father, tender and  
 true,

Deny me not,’ she said — ‘ye never yet  
 Denied my fancies — this, however strange,  
 My latest: lay the letter in my hand  
 A little ere I die, and close the hand  
 Upon it; I shall guard it even in death.  
 And when the heat is gone from out my  
 heart,

Then take the little bed on which I died  
 For Lancelot’s love, and deck it like the  
 Queen’s

For richness, and me also like the Queen  
 In all I have of rich, and lay me on it.  
 And let there be prepared a chariot-bier  
 To take me to the river, and a barge  
 Be ready on the river, clothed in black.  
 I go in state to court, to meet the Queen.

There surely I shall speak for mine own  
self,  
And none of you can speak for me so  
well.  
And therefore let our dumb old man alone  
Go with me, he can steer and row, and he  
Will guide me to that palace, to the doors.'

She ceased: her father promised;  
whereupon  
She grew so cheerful that they deem'd  
her death  
Was rather in the fantasy than the blood.  
But ten slow mornings past, and on the  
eleventh  
Her father laid the letter in her hand,  
And closed the hand upon it, and she  
died.  
So that day there was dole in Astolat.

But when the next sun brake from un-  
derground,  
Then, those two brethren slowly with bent  
brows,  
Accompanying, the sad chariot-bier  
Past like a shadow thro' the field, that  
shone  
Full-summer, to that stream whereon the  
barge,  
Pall'd all its length in blackest samite,  
lay.  
There sat the lifelong creature of the  
house,  
Loyal, the dumb old servitor, on deck,  
Winking his eyes, and twisted all his face.  
So those two brethren from the chariot  
took  
And on the black decks laid her in her  
bed,  
Set in her hand a lily, o'er her hung  
The silken case with braided blazonings,  
And kiss'd her quiet brows, and saying to  
her  
'Sister, farewell for ever,' and again  
'Farewell, sweet sister,' parted all in tears.  
Then rose the dumb old servitor, and the  
dead,  
Oar'd by the dumb, went upward with  
the flood—  
In her right hand the lily, in her left  
The letter—all her bright hair streaming  
down—  
And all the coverlid was cloth of gold

Drawn to her waist, and she herself in  
white  
All but her face, and that clear-featured  
face  
Was lovely, for she did not seem as dead,  
But fast asleep, and lay as tho' she smiled.

That day Sir Lancelot at the palace  
craved  
Audience of Guinevere, to give at last  
The price of half a realm, his costly gift,  
Hard-won and hardly won with bruise and  
blow,  
With deaths of others, and almost his  
own,  
The nine-years-fought-for diamonds: for  
he saw  
One of her house, and sent him to the  
Queen  
Bearing his wish, whereto the Queen  
agreed  
With such and so unmoved a majesty  
She might have seem'd her statue, but  
that he,  
Low-drooping till he wellnigh kiss'd her  
feet  
For loyal awe, saw with a sidelong eye  
The shadow of some piece of pointed  
lace,  
In the Queen's shadow, vibrate on the  
walls,  
And parted, laughing in his courtly heart.

All in an oriel on the summer side,  
Vine-clad, of Arthur's palace toward the  
stream,  
They met, and Lancelot kneeling utter'd,  
'Queen,  
Lady, my liege, in whom I have my joy,  
Take, what I had not won except for you,  
These jewels, and make me happy, making  
them  
An armet for the roundest arm on earth,  
Or necklace for a neck to which the  
swan's  
Is tawnier than her cygnet's: these are  
words:  
Your beauty is your beauty, and I sin  
In speaking, yet O grant my worship of it  
Words, as we grant grief tears. Such sin  
in words  
Perchance, we both can pardon: but, my  
Queen,



I hear of rumours flying thro' your court.  
Our bond, as not the bond of man and  
wife,

Should have in it an absoluter trust  
To make up that defect: let rumours be:  
When did not rumours fly? these, as I  
trust

That you trust me in your own nobleness,  
I may not well believe that you believe.'

While thus he spoke, half-turn'd away,  
the Queen  
Brake from the vast oriel-embowering  
vine

Leaf after leaf, and tore, and cast them  
off,

Till all the place whereon she stood was  
green;

Then, when he ceased, in one cold pas-  
sive hand

Received at once and laid aside the gems  
There on a table near her, and replied:

'It may be, I am quicker of belief  
Than you believe me, Lancelot of the  
Lake.

Our bond is not the bond of man and  
wife.

This good is in it, whatsoe'er of ill,  
It can be broken easier. I for you  
This many a year have done despite and  
wrong

To one whom ever in my heart of hearts  
I did acknowledge nobler. What are  
these?

Diamonds for me! they had been thrice  
their worth

Being your gift, had you not lost your  
own.

To loyal hearts the value of all gifts  
Must vary as the giver's. Not for me!  
For her! for your new fancy. Only this  
Grant me, I pray you: have your joys  
apart.

I doubt not that however changed, you  
keep

So much of what is graceful: and myself  
Would shun to break those bounds of  
courtesy

In which as Arthur's Queen I move and  
rule:

So cannot speak my mind. An end to  
this!

A strange one! yet I take it with Amen.  
So pray you, add my diamonds to her  
pearls;

Deck her with these; tell her she shines  
me down:

An armlet for an arm to which the  
Queen's

Is haggard, or a necklace for a neck  
O as much fairer — as a faith once fair  
Was richer than these diamonds — hers  
not mine —

Nay, by the mother of our Lord himself,  
Or hers or mine, mine now to work my  
will —

She shall not have them.'

Saying which she seized,  
And, thro' the casement standing wide  
for heat,

Flung them, and down they flash'd, and  
smote the stream.

Then from the smitten surface flash'd, as  
it were,

Diamonds to meet them, and they past  
away.

Then while Sir Lancelot leant, in half  
disdain

At love, life, all things, on the window  
ledge,

Close underneath his eyes, and right  
across

Where these had fallen, slowly past the  
barge

Whereon the lily maid of Astolat  
Laysmiling, like a star in blackest night.

But the wild Queen, who saw not, burst  
away

To weep and wail in secret; and the  
barge,

On to the palace-doorway sliding, paused.  
There two stood arm'd, and kept the  
door; to whom,

All up the marble stair, tier over tier,  
Were added mouths that gaped, and eyes  
that ask'd

'What is it?' but that oarsman's haggard  
face,

As hard and still as is the face that men  
Shape to their fancy's eye from broken  
rocks

On some cliff-side, appall'd them, and  
they said,

'He is enchanted, cannot speak — and she,  
 Look how she sleeps — the Fairy Queen,  
 so fair!  
 Yea, but how pale! what are they? flesh  
 and blood?  
 Or come to take the King to Fairyland?  
 For some do hold our Arthur cannot die,  
 But that he passes into Fairyland.'

While thus they babbled of the King,  
 the King  
 Came girt with knights: then turn'd the  
 tongueless man  
 From the half-face to the full eye, and  
 rose  
 And pointed to the damsel, and the  
 doors.  
 So Arthur bade the meek Sir Percivale  
 And pure Sir Galahad to uplift the maid;  
 And reverently they bore her into hall.  
 Then came the fine Gawain and wonder'd  
 at her,  
 And Lancelot later came and mused at  
 her,  
 And last the Queen herself, and pitied  
 her:  
 But Arthur spied the letter in her hand,  
 Stoopt, took, brake seal, and read it;  
 this was all:

'Most noble lord, Sir Lancelot of the  
 Lake,  
 I, sometime call'd the maid of Astolat,  
 Come, for you left me taking no farewell,  
 Hither, to take my last farewell of you.  
 I loved you, and my love had no return,  
 And therefore my true love has been my  
 death.  
 And therefore to our Lady Guinevere,  
 And to all other ladies, I make moan:  
 Pray for my soul, and yield me burial.  
 Pray for my soul thou too, Sir Lancelot,  
 As thou art a knight peerless.'

Thus he read;  
 And ever in the reading, lords and dames  
 Wept, looking often from his face who  
 read  
 To hers which lay so silent, and at times,  
 So touch'd were they, half-thinking that  
 her lips,  
 Who had devised the letter, moved again.

Then freely spoke Sir Lancelot to them  
 all:  
 'My lord liege Arthur, and all ye that  
 hear,  
 Know that for this most gentle maiden's  
 death  
 Right heavy am I; for good she was and  
 true,  
 But loved me with a love beyond all love  
 In women, whomsoever I have known.  
 Yet to be loved makes not to love again;  
 Not at my years, however it hold in  
 youth.  
 I swear by truth and knighthood that I  
 gave  
 No cause, not willingly, for such a love:  
 To this I call my friends in testimony,  
 Her brethren, and her father, who him-  
 self  
 Besought me to be plain and blunt, and  
 use,  
 To break her passion, some discourtesy  
 Against my nature: what I could, I did.  
 I left her and I bade her no farewell;  
 Tho', had I dreamt the damsel would  
 have died,  
 I might have put my wits to some rough  
 use,  
 And help'd her from herself.'

Then said the Queen  
 (Sea was her wrath, yet working after  
 storm),  
 'Ye might at least have done her so  
 much grace,  
 Fair lord, as would have help'd her from  
 her death.'  
 He raised his head, their eyes met and  
 hers fell,  
 He adding,  
 'Queen, she would not be content  
 Save that I wedded her, which could not  
 be.  
 Then might she follow me thro' the world,  
 she ask'd;  
 It could not be. I told her that her love  
 Was but the flash of youth, would darken  
 down  
 To rise hereafter in a stiller flame  
 Toward one more worthy of her — then  
 would I,  
 More specially were he, she wedded,  
 poor,

Estate them with large land and territory  
 In mine own realm beyond the narrow  
 seas,  
 To keep them in all joyance: more than  
 this  
 I could not; this she would not, and she  
 died.'

He pausing, Arthur answer'd, 'O my  
 knight,  
 It will be to thy worship, as my knight,  
 And mine, as head of all our Table  
 Round,  
 To see that she be buried worshipfully.'

So toward that shrine which then in  
 all the realm  
 Was richest, Arthur leading, slowly went  
 The marshall'd Order of their Table  
 Round,

And Lancelot sad beyond his wont, to see  
 The maiden buried, not as one unknown,  
 Nor meanly, but with gorgeous obsequies,  
 And mass, and rolling music, like a  
 queen.

And when the knights had laid her  
 comely head

Low in the dust of half-forgotten kings,  
 Then Arthur spake among them, 'Let  
 her tomb

Be costly, and her image thereupon,  
 And let the shield of Lancelot at her  
 feet

Be carven, and her lily in her hand.  
 And let the story of her dolorous voyage  
 For all true hearts be blazon'd on her  
 tomb

In letters gold and azure!' which was  
 wrought

Thereafter; but when now the lords and  
 dames

And people, from the high door stream-  
 ing, brake

Disorderly, as homeward each, the Queen,  
 Who mark'd Sir Lancelot where he  
 moved apart,

Drew near, and sigh'd in passing, 'Lance-  
 lot,

Forgive me; mine was jealousy in love.'  
 He answer'd with his eyes upon the  
 ground,

'That is love's curse; pass on, my Queen,  
 forgiven.'

But Arthur, who beheld his cloudy brows,  
 Approach'd him, and with full affection  
 said,

'Lancelot, my Lancelot, thou in whom  
 I have

Most joy and most affiance, for I know  
 What thou hast been in battle by my  
 side,

And many a time have watch'd thee at  
 the tilt

Strike down the lusty and long-practised  
 knight,

And let the younger and unskill'd go by  
 To win his honour and to make his name,  
 And loved thy courtesies and thee, a man  
 Made to be loved; but now I would to  
 God,

Seeing the homeless trouble in thine eyes,  
 Thou couldst have loved this maiden,  
 shaped, it seems,

By God for thee alone, and from her face,  
 If one may judge the living by the dead,  
 Delicately pure and marvellously fair,  
 Who might have brought thee, now a  
 lonely man

Wifeless and heirless, noble issue, sons  
 Born to the glory of thy name and fame,  
 My knight, the great Sir Lancelot of  
 the Lake.'

Then answer'd Lancelot, 'Fair she  
 was, my King,

Pure, as you ever wish your knights to be.  
 To doubt her fairness were to want an  
 eye,

To doubt her pureness were to want a  
 heart—

Yea, to be loved, if what is worthy love  
 Could bind him, but free love will not  
 be bound.'

'Free love, so bound, were freest,' said  
 the King.

'Let love be free; free love is for the  
 best:

And, after heaven, on our dull side of  
 death,

What should be best, if not so pure a  
 love

Clothed in so pure a loveliness? yet thee  
 She fail'd to bind, tho' being, as I think,  
 Unbound as yet, and gentle, as I know.'

And Lancelot answer'd nothing, but  
 he went,  
 And at the inrunning of a little brook  
 Sat by the river in a cove, and watch'd  
 The high reed wave, and lifted up his  
 eyes  
 And saw the barge that brought her  
 moving down,  
 Far-off, a blot upon the stream, and said  
 Low in himself, 'Ah, simple heart and  
 sweet,  
 Ye loved me, damsel, surely with a love  
 Far tenderer than my Queen's. Pray for  
 thy soul?  
 Ay, that will I. Farewell too — now at  
 last —  
 Farewell, fair lily. "Jealousy in love?"  
 Not rather dead love's harsh heir, jealous  
 pride?  
 Queen, if I grant the jealousy as of  
 love,  
 May not your crescent fear for name and  
 fame  
 Speak, as it waxes, of a love that wanes?  
 Why did the King dwell on my name to  
 me?  
 Mine own name shames me, seeming a  
 reproach,  
 Lancelot, whom the Lady of the Lake  
 Caught from his mother's arms — the  
 wondrous one  
 Who passes thro' the vision of the night —  
 She chanted snatches of mysterious hymns  
 Heard on the winding waters, eve and  
 morn  
 She kiss'd me saying, "Thou art fair,  
 my child,  
 As a king's son," and often in her arms  
 She bare me, pacing on the dusky mere.  
 Would she had drown'd me in it, wher-  
 e'er it be!  
 For what am I? what profits me my  
 name  
 Of greatest knight? I fought for it,  
 and have it:  
 Pleasure to have it, none; to lose it,  
 pain;  
 Now grown a part of me: but what use  
 in it?  
 To make men worse by making my sin  
 known?  
 Or sin seem less, the sinner seeming  
 great?

Alas for Arthur's greatest knight, a man  
 Not after Arthur's heart! I needs must  
 break  
 These bonds that so defame me: not  
 without  
 She wills it: would I, if she will'd it?  
 nay,  
 Who knows? but if I would not, then  
 may God,  
 I pray him, send a sudden Angel down  
 To seize me by the hair and bear me  
 far,  
 And fling me deep in that forgotten  
 mere,  
 Among the tumbled fragments of the  
 hills.'

So groan'd Sir Lancelot in remorseful  
 pain,  
 Not knowing he should die a holy man.

#### THE HOLY GRAIL.

FROM noiseful arms, and acts of prowess  
 done  
 In tournament or tilt, Sir Percivale,  
 Whom Arthur and his knighthood call'd  
 The Pure,  
 Had pass'd into the silent life of prayer,  
 Praise, fast, and alms; and leaving for  
 the cowl  
 The helmet in an abbey far away  
 From Camelot, there, and not long after,  
 died.

And one, a fellow-monk among the  
 rest,  
 Ambrosius, loved him much beyond the  
 rest,  
 And honour'd him, and wrought into  
 his heart  
 A way by love that waken'd love within,  
 To answer that which came: and as  
 they sat  
 Beneath a world-old yew-tree, darkening  
 half  
 The cloisters, on a gustful April morn  
 That puff'd the swaying branches into  
 smoke  
 Above them, ere the summer when he  
 died,  
 The monk Ambrosius question'd Per-  
 civale:

'O brother, I have seen this yew-tree  
 smoke,  
 Spring after spring, for half a hundred  
 years:  
 For never have I known the world with-  
 out,  
 Nor ever stray'd beyond the pale: but  
 thee,  
 When first thou camest — such a courtesy  
 Spake thro' the limbs and in the voice —  
 I knew  
 For one of those who eat in Arthur's hall;  
 For good ye are and bad, and like to coins,  
 Some true, some light, but every one of you  
 Stamp'd with the image of the King; and  
 now  
 Tell me, what drove thee from the Table  
 Round,  
 My brother? was it earthly passion crost?'

'Nay,' said the knight; 'for no such  
 passion mine.  
 But the sweet vision of the Holy Grail  
 Drove me from all vainglories, rivalries,  
 And earthly heats that spring and sparkle  
 out  
 Among us in the jousts, while women  
 watch  
 Who wins, who falls; and waste the  
 spiritual strength  
 Within us, better offer'd up to Heaven.'

To whom the monk: 'The Holy  
 Grail! — I trust  
 We are green in Heaven's eyes; but here  
 too much  
 We moulder — as to things without I  
 mean —  
 Yet one of your own knights, a guest of  
 ours,  
 Told us of this in our refectory,  
 But spake with such a sadness and so low  
 We heard not half of what he said. What  
 is it?  
 The phantom of a cup that comes and  
 goes?'

'Nay, monk! what phantom?' an-  
 swer'd Percivale.  
 'The cup, the cup itself, from which our  
 Lord  
 Drank at the last sad supper with his own.  
 This, from the blessed land of Aromat —

After the day of darkness, when the dead  
 Went wandering o'er Moriah — the good  
 saint

Arimathæan Joseph, journeying brought  
 To Glastonbury, where the winter thorn  
 Blossoms at Christmas, mindful of our  
 Lord.

And there awhile it bode; and if a man  
 Could touch or see it, he was heal'd at  
 once,

By faith, of all his ills. But then the times  
 Grew to such evil that the holy cup  
 Was caught away to Heaven, and disap-  
 pear'd.'

To whom the monk: 'From our old  
 books I know  
 That Joseph came of old to Glastonbury,  
 And there the heathen Prince, Arviragus,  
 Gave him an isle of marsh whereon to  
 build;

And there he built with wattles from the  
 marsh

A little lonely church in days of yore,  
 For so they say, these books of ours, but  
 seem

Mute of this miracle, far as I have read.  
 But who first saw the holy thing to-day?'

'A woman,' answer'd Percivale, 'a  
 nun,

And one no further off in blood from me  
 Than sister; and if ever holy maid  
 With knees of adoration wore the stone,  
 A holy maid; tho' never maiden glow'd,  
 But that was in her earlier maidenhood,  
 With such a fervent flame of human love,  
 Which being rudely blunted, glanced and  
 shot

Only to holy things; to prayer and praise  
 She gave herself, to fast and alms. And  
 yet,

Nun as she was, the scandal of the Court,  
 Sin against Arthur and the Table Round,  
 And the strange sound of an adulterous  
 race,

Across the iron grating of her cell  
 Beat, and she pray'd and fasted all the  
 more.

'And he to whom she told her sins, or  
 what  
 Her all but utter whiteness held for sin,

A man wellnigh a hundred winters old,  
Spake often with her of the Holy Grail,  
A legend handed down thro' five or six,  
And each of these a hundred winters old,  
From our Lord's time. And when King  
Arthur made

His Table Round, and all men's hearts  
became

Clean for a season, surely he had thought  
That now the Holy Grail would come  
again;

But sin broke out. Ah, Christ, that it  
would come,  
And heal the world of all their wicked-  
ness!

"O Father!" ask'd the maiden, "might  
it come

To me by prayer and fasting?" "Nay,"  
said he,

"I know not, for thy heart is pure as  
snow."

And so she pray'd and fasted, till the sun  
Shone, and the wind blew, thro' her, and  
I thought

She might have risen and floated when I  
saw her.

'For on a day she sent to speak with  
me.

And when she came to speak, behold her  
eyes

Beyond my knowing of them, beautiful,  
Beyond all knowing of them, wonderful,  
Beautiful in the light of holiness.

And "O my brother Percivale," she said,  
"Sweet brother, I have seen the Holy  
Grail:

For, waked at dead of night, I heard a  
sound

As of a silver horn from o'er the hills  
Blown, and I thought, 'It is not Arthur's  
use

To hunt by moonlight;' and the slender  
sound

As from a distance beyond distance grew  
Coming upon me — O never harp nor horn,  
Nor aught we blow with breath, or touch  
with hand,

Was like that music as it came; and then  
Stream'd thro' my cell a cold and silver  
beam,

And down the long beam stole the Holy  
Grail,

Rose-red with beatings in it, as if alive,  
Till all the white walls of my cell were  
dyed

With rosy colours leaping on the wall;  
And then the music faded, and the Grail  
Past, and the beam decay'd, and from the  
walls

The rosy quiverings died into the night.  
So now the Holy Thing is here again  
Among us, brother, fast thou too and  
pray,

And tell thy brother knights to fast and  
pray,

That so perchance the vision may be seen  
By thee and those, and all the world be  
heal'd."

'Then leaving the pale nun, I spake  
of this

To all men; and myself fasted and  
pray'd

Always, and many among us many a  
week

Fasted and pray'd even to the uttermost,  
Expectant of the wonder that would be.

'And one there was among us, ever  
moved

Among us in white armour, Galahad.  
"God make thee good as thou art beau-  
tiful,"

Said Arthur, when he dubb'd him knight;  
and none

In so young youth, was ever made a  
knight

Till Galahad; and this Galahad, when  
he heard

My sister's vision, fill'd me with amaze;  
His eyes became so like her own, they  
seem'd

Hers, and himself her brother more than I.

'Sister or brother none had he; but  
some

Call'd him a son of Lancelot, and some  
said

Begotten by enchantment — chatters  
they,

Like birds of passage piping up and down,  
That gape for flies — we know not whence  
they come;

For when was Lancelot wanderingly  
lew'd?



'But she, the wan sweet maiden, shore  
 away  
 Clean from her forehead all that wealth  
 of hair  
 Which made a silken mat-work for her  
 feet;  
 And out of this she plaited broad and  
 long  
 A strong sword-belt, and wove with silver  
 thread  
 And crimson in the belt a strange device,  
 A crimson grail within a silver beam;  
 And saw the bright boy-knight, and  
 bound it on him,  
 Saying, "My knight, my love, my knight  
 of heaven,  
 O thou, my love, whose love is one with  
 mine,  
 I, maiden, round thee, maiden, bind my  
 belt.  
 Go forth, for thou shalt see what I have  
 seen,  
 And break thro' all, till one will crown  
 thee king  
 Far in the spiritual city:" and as she  
 spake  
 She sent the deathless passion in her  
 eyes  
 Thro' him, and made him hers, and laid  
 her mind  
 On him, and he believed in her belief.

'Then came a year of miracle: O  
 brother,  
 In our great hall there stood a vacant  
 chair,  
 Fashion'd by Merlin ere he past away,  
 And carven with strange figures; and in  
 and out  
 The figures, like a serpent, ran a scroll  
 Of letters in a tongue no man could  
 read.  
 And Merlin call'd it "The Siege peril-  
 ous,"  
 Perilous for good and ill; "for there,"  
 he said,  
 "No man could sit but he should lose  
 himself:"  
 And once by misadventence Merlin sat  
 In his own chair, and so was lost; but he,  
 Galahad, when he heard of Merlin's  
 doom,  
 Cried, "If I lose myself, I save myself!"

'Then on a summer night it came to  
 pass,  
 While the great banquet lay along the  
 hall,  
 That Galahad would sit down in Merlin's  
 chair.

'And all at once, as there we sat, we  
 heard  
 A cracking and a riving of the roofs,  
 And rending, and a blast, and overhead  
 Thunder, and in the thunder was a cry.  
 And in the blast there smote along the hall  
 A beam of light seven times more clear  
 than day:  
 And down the long beam stole the Holy  
 Grail  
 All over cover'd with a luminous cloud,  
 And none might see who bare it, and it  
 past.  
 But every knight beheld his fellow's face  
 As in a glory, and all the knights arose,  
 And staring each at other like dumb men  
 Stood, till I found a voice and sware a  
 vow.

'I sware a vow before them all, that I,  
 Because I had not seen the Grail, would  
 ride  
 A twelvemonth and a day in quest of it,  
 Until I found and saw it, as the nun  
 My sister saw it; and Galahad sware the  
 vow,  
 And good Sir Bors, our Lancelot's cousin,  
 sware,  
 And Lancelot sware, and many among  
 the knights,  
 And Gawain sware, and louder than the  
 rest.'

Then spake the monk Ambrosius, ask-  
 ing him,  
 'What said the King? Did Arthur take  
 the vow?'

'Nay, for my lord,' said Percivale,  
 'the King,  
 Was not in hall: for early that same day  
 Scaped thro' a cavern from a bandit hold.  
 An outraged maiden sprang into the hall  
 Crying on help: for all her shining hair  
 Was smear'd with earth, and either milky  
 arm

Red-rent with hooks of bramble, and all  
 she wore  
 Torn as a sail that leaves the rope is torn  
 In tempest: so the King arose and went  
 To smoke the scandalous hive of those  
 wild bees  
 That made such honey in his realm.  
 Howbeit  
 Some little of this marvel he too saw,  
 Returning o'er the plain that then began  
 To darken under Camelot; whence the  
 King  
 Look'd up, calling aloud, "Lo, there!  
 the roofs  
 Of our great hall are roll'd in thunder-  
 smoke!  
 Pray Heaven, they be not smitten by the  
 bolt!"  
 For dear to Arthur was that hall of ours,  
 As having there so oft with all his knights  
 Feasted, and as the stateliest under  
 heaven.

"O brother, had you known our mighty  
 hall,  
 Which Merlin built for Arthur long ago!  
 For all the sacred mount of Camelot,  
 And all the dim rich city, roof by roof,  
 Tower after tower, spire beyond spire,  
 By grove, and garden-lawn, and rushing  
 brook,  
 Climbs to the mighty hall that Merlin  
 built.  
 And four great zones of sculpture, set  
 betwix  
 With many a mystic symbol, gird the hall:  
 And in the lowest beasts are slaying men,  
 And in the second men are slaying beasts,  
 And on the third are warriors, perfect  
 men,  
 And on the fourth are men with growing  
 wings,  
 And over all one statue in the mould  
 Of Arthur, made by Merlin, with a crown,  
 And peak'd wings pointed to the Northern  
 Star.  
 And eastward fronts the statue, and the  
 crown  
 And both the wings are made of gold,  
 and flame  
 At sunrise till the people in far fields,  
 Wasted so often by the heathen hordes,  
 Behold it, crying, "We have still a King."

'And, brother, had you known our hall  
 within,  
 Broader and higher than any in all the  
 lands!  
 Where twelve great windows blazon  
 Arthur's wars,  
 And all the light that falls upon the board  
 Streams thro' the twelve great battles of  
 our King.  
 Nay, one there is, and at the eastern end,  
 Wealthy with wandering lines of mount  
 and mere,  
 Where Arthur finds the brand Excalibur.  
 And also one to the west, and counter to it,  
 And blank: and who shall blazon it?  
 when and how? —  
 O there, perchance, when all our wars are  
 done,  
 The brand Excalibur will be cast away.

'So to this hall full quickly rode the  
 King,  
 In horror lest the work by Merlin wrought,  
 Dreamlike, should on the sudden vanish,  
 wrapt  
 In unremorseful folds of rolling fire.  
 And in he rode, and up I glanced, and  
 saw  
 The golden dragon sparkling over all:  
 And many of those who burnt the hold,  
 their arms  
 Hack'd, and their foreheads grimed with  
 smoke, and sear'd,  
 Follow'd, and in among bright faces, ours,  
 Full of the vision, prest: and then the  
 King  
 Spake to me, being nearest, "Percivale"  
 (Because the hall was all in tumult —  
 some  
 Vowing, and some protesting), "what is  
 this?"

'O brother, when I told him what had  
 chanced,  
 My sister's vision, and the rest, his face  
 Darken'd, as I have seen it more than  
 once,  
 When some brave deed seem'd to be  
 done in vain,  
 Darken; and "Woe is me, my knights,"  
 he cried,  
 "Had I been here, ye had not sworn the  
 vow."

Bold was mine answer, "Had thyself  
been here,  
My King, thou wouldst have sworn."  
"Yea, yea," said he,  
"Art thou so bold and hast not seen the  
Grail?"

"Nay, lord, I heard the sound, I  
saw the light,  
But since I did not see the Holy Thing,  
I swear a vow to follow it till I saw."

"Then when he ask'd us, knight by  
knight, if any  
Had seen it, all their answers were as  
one:

"Nay, lord, and therefore have we sworn  
our vows."

"Lo now," said Arthur, "have ye  
seen a cloud?  
What go ye into the wilderness to see?"

"Then Galahad on the sudden, and in  
a voice  
Shrilling along the hall to Arthur, call'd,  
"But I, Sir Arthur, saw the Holy Grail,  
I saw the Holy Grail and heard a cry —  
'O Galahad, and O Galahad, follow me.'"

"Ah, Galahad, Galahad," said the  
King, "for such  
As thou art is the vision, not for these.  
Thy holy nun and thou have seen a sign —  
Holier is nonè, my Percivale, than she —  
A sign to maim this Order which I made.  
But ye, that follow but the leader's bell"  
(Brother, the King was hard upon his  
knights),

"Taliessin is our fullest throat of song,  
And one hath sung and all the dumb will  
sing.

Lancelot is Lancelot, and hath overborne  
Five knights at once, and every younger  
knight,

Unproven, holds himself as Lancelot,  
Till overborne by one, he learns — and ye,  
What are ye? Galahads? — no, nor  
Percivales"

(For thus it pleased the King to range  
me close

After Sir Galahad); "nay," said he,  
"but men

With strength and will to right the  
wrong'd, of power

To lay the sudden heads of violence  
flat,

Knights that in twelve great battles  
splash'd and dyed

The strong White Horse in his own  
heathen blood —

But one hath seen, and all the blind will  
see.

Go, since your vows are sacred, being  
made:

Yet—for ye know the cries of all my  
realm

Pass thro' this hall—how often, O my  
knights,

Your places being vacant at my side,  
This chance of noble deeds will come  
and go

Unchallenged, while ye follow wandering  
fires

Lost in the quagmire! Many of you, yea  
most,

Return no more: ye think I show my-  
self

Too dark a prophct: come now, let us  
meet

The morrow morn once more in one full  
field

Of gracious pastime, that once more the  
King,

Before ye leave him for this Quest, may  
count

The yet-unbroken strength of all his  
knights,

Rejoicing in that Order which he made."

'So when the sun broke next from  
under ground,

All the great table of our Arthur closed  
And clash'd in such a tourney and so  
full,

So many lances broken — never yet  
Had Camelot seen the like, since Arthur  
came;

And I myself and Galahad, for a strength  
Was in us from the vision, overthrew

So many knights that all the people  
cried,

And almost burst the barriers in their  
heat,

Shouting, "Sir Galahad and Sir Perci-  
vale!"

'But when the next day brake from  
 under ground —  
 O brother, had you known our Camelot,  
 Built by old kings, age after age, so old  
 The King himself had fears that it would  
 fall,  
 So strange, and rich, and dim; for where  
 the roofs  
 Totter'd toward each other in the sky,  
 Met foreheads all along the street of  
 those  
 Who watch'd us pass; and lower, and  
 where the long  
 Rich galleries, lady-laden, weigh'd the  
 necks  
 Of dragons clinging to the crazy walls,  
 Thicker than drops from thunder, showers  
 of flowers  
 Fell as we past; and men and boys astride  
 On wyvern, lion, dragon, griffin, swan,  
 At all the corners, named us each by  
 name,  
 Calling "God speed!" but in the ways  
 below  
 The knights and ladies wept, and rich  
 and poor  
 Wept, and the King himself could hardly  
 speak  
 For grief, and all in middle street the  
 Queen,  
 Who rode by Lancelot, wail'd and shriek'd  
 aloud,  
 "This madness has come on us for our  
 sins."  
 So to the Gate of the three Queens we  
 came,  
 Where Arthur's wars are render'd mysti-  
 cally,  
 And thence departed every one his way.

'And I was lifted up in heart, and  
 thought  
 Of all my late-shown prowess in the  
 lists,  
 How my strong lance had beaten down  
 the knights,  
 So many and famous names; and never  
 yet  
 Had heaven appear'd so blue, nor earth  
 so green,  
 For all my blood danced in me, and I  
 knew  
 That I should light upon the Holy Grail.

'Thereafter, the dark warning of our  
 King,  
 That most of us would follow wandering  
 fires,  
 Came like a driving gloom across my  
 mind.  
 Then every evil word I had spoken once,  
 And every evil thought I had thought of  
 old,  
 And every evil deed I ever did,  
 Awoke and cried, "This Quest is not for  
 thee."  
 And lifting up mine eyes, I found myself  
 Alone, and in a land of sand and thorns,  
 And I was thirsty even unto death;  
 And I, too, cried, "This Quest is not for  
 thee."

'And on I rode, and when I thought  
 my thirst  
 Would slay me, saw deep lawns, and then  
 a brook,  
 With one sharp rapid, where the crisping  
 white  
 Play'd ever back upon the sloping wave,  
 And took both ear and eye; and o'er  
 the brook  
 Were apple-trees, and apples by the  
 brook  
 Fallen, and on the lawns. "I will rest  
 here,"  
 I said, "I am not worthy of the Quest;"  
 But even while I drank the brook, and  
 ate  
 The goodly apples, all these things at  
 once  
 Fell into dust, and I was left alone,  
 And thirsting, in a land of sand and  
 thorns.

'And then behold a woman at a door  
 Spinning; and fair the house whereby  
 she sat,  
 And kind the woman's eyes and innocent,  
 And all her bearing gracious; and she  
 rose  
 Opening her arms to meet me, as who  
 should say,  
 "Rest here;" but when I touch'd her, lo!  
 she, too,  
 Fell into dust and nothing, and the  
 house  
 Became no better than a broken shed,

And in it a dead babe; and also this  
Fell into dust, and I was left alone.

'And on I rode, and greater was my  
thirst.  
Then flash'd a yellow gleam across the  
world,  
And where it smote the plowshare in the  
field,  
The plowman left his plowing, and fell  
down  
Before it; where it glitter'd on her pail,  
The milkmaid left her milking, and fell  
down  
Before it, and I knew not why, but  
thought  
"The sun is rising," tho' the sun had  
risen.  
Then was I ware of one that on me  
moved  
In golden armour with a crown of gold  
About a casque all jewels; and his horse  
In golden armour jewell'd everywhere:  
And on the splendour came, flashing me  
blind;  
And seem'd to me the Lord of all the  
world,  
Being so huge. But when I thought he  
meant  
To crush me, moving on me, lo! he, too,  
Open'd his arms to embrace me as he  
came,  
And up I went and touch'd him, and he,  
too,  
Fell into dust, and I was left alone  
And wearying in a land of sand and  
thorns.

'And I rode on and found a mighty  
hill,  
And on the top, a city wall'd: the spires  
Prick'd with incredible pinnacles into  
heaven.  
And by the gateway stirr'd a crowd;  
and these  
Cried to me climbing, "Welcome, Perci-  
vale!  
Thou mightiest and thou purest among  
men!"  
And glad was I and clomb, but found at  
top  
No man, nor any voice. And thence I  
past

Far thro' a ruinous city, and I saw  
That man had once dwelt there; but  
there I found  
Only one man of an exceeding age.  
"Where is that goodly company," said I,  
"That so cried out upon me?" and he  
had  
Scarce any voice to answer, and yet  
gasp'd,  
"Whence and what art thou?" and even  
as he spoke  
Fell into dust, and disappear'd, and I  
Was left alone once more, and cried in  
grief,  
"Lo, if I find the Holy Grail itself  
And touch it, it will crumble into dust."

'And thence I dropt into a lowly vale,  
Low as the hill was high, and where the  
vale  
Was lowest, found a chapel, and thereby  
A holy hermit in a hermitage,  
To whom I told my phantoms, and he  
said:

"O son, thou hast not true humility,  
The highest virtue, mother of them all;  
For when the Lord of all things made  
Himself  
Naked of glory for His mortal change,  
'Take thou my robe,' she said, 'for all is  
thine,'  
And all her form shone forth with sud-  
den light  
So that the angels were amazed, and she  
Follow'd Him down, and like a flying star  
Led on the gray-hair'd wisdom of the  
east;  
But her thou hast not known: for what  
is this  
Thou thoughtest of thy prowess and thy  
sins?  
Thou hast not lost thyself to save thyself  
As Galahad." When the hermit made  
an end,  
In silver armour suddenly Galahad shone  
Before us, and against the chapel door  
Laid lance, and enter'd, and we knelt in  
prayer.  
And there the hermit slaked my burning  
thirst,  
And at the sacring of the mass I saw  
The holy elements alone; but he,

"Saw ye no more? I, Galahad, saw the  
 Grail,  
 The Holy Grail, descend upon the  
 shrine :  
 I saw the fiery face as of a child  
 That smote itself into the bread, and  
 went ;  
 And hither am I come ; and never yet  
 Hath what thy sister taught me first to see,  
 This Holy Thing, fail'd from my side, nor  
 come  
 Cover'd, but moving with me night and  
 day,  
 Fainter by day, but always in the night  
 Blood-red, and sliding down the blacken'd  
 marsh  
 Blood-red, and on the naked mountain  
 top  
 Blood-red, and in the sleeping mere  
 below  
 Blood-red. And in the strength of this  
 I rode,  
 Shattering all evil customs everywhere,  
 And past thro' Pagan realms, and made  
 them mine,  
 And clash'd with Pagan hordes, and  
 bore them down,  
 And broke thro' all, and in the strength  
 of this  
 Come victor. But my time is hard at  
 hand,  
 And hence I go ; and one will crown me  
 king  
 Far in the spiritual city ; and come thou,  
 too,  
 For thou shalt see the vision when I go."

' While thus he spake, his eye, dwell-  
 ing on mine,  
 Drew me, with power upon me, till I  
 grew  
 One with him, to believe as he believed.  
 Then, when the day began to wane, we  
 went.

' There rose a hill that none but man  
 could climb,  
 Scarr'd with a hundred wintry water-  
 courses—  
 Storm at the top, and when we gain'd it,  
 storm  
 Round us and death ; for every moment  
 glanced

His silver arms and gloom'd : so quick  
 and thick  
 The lightnings here and there to left and  
 right  
 Struck, till the dry old trunks about us,  
 dead,  
 Yea, rotten with a hundred years of  
 death,  
 Sprang into fire : and at the base we  
 found  
 On either hand, as far as eye could see,  
 A great black swamp and of an evil  
 smell,  
 Part black, part whiten'd with the bones  
 of men,  
 Not to be crost, save that some ancient  
 king  
 Had built a way, where, link'd with  
 many a bridge,  
 A thousand piers ran into the great Sea.  
 And Galahad fled along them bridge by  
 bridge,  
 And every bridge as quickly as he crost  
 Sprang into fire and vanish'd, tho' I  
 yearn'd  
 To follow ; and thrice above him all the  
 heavens  
 Open'd and blazed with thunder such as  
 seem'd  
 Shoutings of all the sons of God : and  
 first  
 At once I saw him far on the great Sea,  
 In silver-shining armour starry-clear ;  
 And o'er his head the Holy Vessel hung  
 Clothed in white samite or a luminous  
 cloud.  
 And with exceeding swiftiness ran the  
 boat,  
 If boat it were—I saw not whence it  
 came.  
 And when the heavens open'd and blazed  
 again  
 Roaring, I saw him like a silver star—  
 And had he set the sail, or had the boat  
 Become a living creature clad with  
 wings?  
 And o'er his head the Holy Vessel hung  
 Redder than any rose, a joy to me,  
 For now I knew the veil had been with-  
 drawn.  
 Then in a moment when they blazed  
 again  
 Opening, I saw the least of little stars



Down on the waste, and straight beyond  
the star

I saw the spiritual city and all her spires  
And gateways in a glory like one pearl —  
No larger, tho' the goal of all the saints —  
Strike from the sea; and from the star  
there shot

A rose-red sparkle to the city, and there  
Dwelt, and I knew it was the Holy Grail,  
Which never eyes on earth again shall  
see.

Then fell the floods of heaven drowning  
the deep.

And how my feet recrost the deathful  
ridge

No memory in me lives; but that I  
touch'd

The chapel-doors at dawn I know; and  
thence

Taking my war-horse from the holy  
man,

Glad that no phantom vex't me more,  
return'd

To whence I came, the gate of Arthur's  
wars.'

'O brother,' ask'd Ambrosius, — 'for  
in sooth

These ancient books — and they would  
win thee — teem,

Only I find not there this Holy Grail,  
With miracles and marvels like to these,  
Not all unlike; which oftentime I read,  
Who read but on my breviary with ease,  
Till my head swims; and then go forth  
and pass

Down to the little thorpe that lies so  
close,

And almost plaster'd like a martin's nest  
To these old walls — and mingle with  
our folk;

And knowing every honest face of theirs  
As well as ever shepherd knew his sheep,  
And every homely secret in their hearts,  
Delight myself with gossip and old wives,  
And ills and aches, and teething, lyings-  
in,

And mirthful sayings, children of the  
place,

That have no meaning half a league  
away:

Or lulling random squabbles when they  
rise,

Chafferings and chatterings at the mar-  
ket-cross,

Rejoice, small man, in this small world  
of mine,

Yea, even in their hens and in their  
eggs —

O brother, saving this Sir Galahad,  
Came ye on none but phantoms in your  
quest,

No man, no woman?'

Then Sir Percivale :

'All men, to one so bound by such a vow,  
And women were as phantoms. O my  
brother,

Why wilt thou shame me to confess to  
thee

How far I falter'd from my quest and  
vow?

For after I had lain so many nights,  
A bedmate of the snail and eft and snake,  
In grass and burdock, I was changed to  
wan

And meagre, and the vision had not  
come;

And then I chanced upon a goodly town  
With one great dwelling in the middle  
of it;

Thither I made, and there was I disarm'd  
By maidens each as fair as any flower:  
But when they led me into hall, behold,  
The Princess of that castle was the one,  
Brother, and that one only, who had ever  
Made my heart leap; for when I moved  
of old

A slender page about her father's hall,  
And she a slender maiden, all my heart  
Went after her with longing: yet we  
twain

Had never kiss'd a kiss, or vow'd a vow.  
And now I came upon her once again,  
And one had wedded her, and he was  
dead,

And all his land and wealth and state  
were hers.

And while I tarried, every day she set  
A banquet richer than the day before  
By me; for all her longing and her will  
Was toward me as of old; till one fair  
morn,

I walking to and fro beside a stream  
That flash'd across her orchard under-  
neath

Her castle-walls, she stole upon my walk,  
 And calling me the greatest of all knights,  
 Embraced me, and so kiss'd me the first  
 time,  
 And gave herself and all her wealth to  
 me.  
 Then I remember'd Arthur's warning  
 word,  
 That most of us would follow wandering  
 fires,  
 And the Quest faded in my heart. Anon,  
 The heads of all her people drew to me,  
 With supplication both of knees and  
 tongue:  
 "We have heard of thee: thou art our  
 greatest knight,  
 Our Lady says it, and we well believe:  
 Wed thou our Lady, and rule over us,  
 And thou shalt be as Arthur in our land."  
 O me, my brother! but one night my  
 vow  
 Burnt me within, so that I rose and fled,  
 But wail'd and wept, and hated mine  
 own self,  
 And ev'n the Holy Quest, and all but  
 her;  
 Then after I was join'd with Galahad  
 Cared not for her, nor anything upon  
 earth.'

Then said the monk, 'Poor men, when  
 yule is cold,  
 Must be content to sit by little fires.  
 And this am I, so that ye care for me  
 Ever so little; yea, and blest be Heaven  
 That brought thee here to this poor  
 house of ours  
 Where all the brethren are so hard, to  
 warm  
 My cold heart with a friend: but O the  
 pity  
 To find thine own first love once more—  
 to hold,  
 Hold her a wealthy bride within thine  
 arms,  
 Or all but hold, and then—cast her  
 aside,  
 Foregoing all her sweetness, like a weed.  
 For we that want the warmth of double  
 life,  
 We that are plagued with dreams of  
 something sweet  
 Beyond all sweetness in a life so rich,—

Ah, blessed Lord, I speak too earthly-  
 wise,  
 Seeing I never stray'd beyond the cell,  
 But live like an old badger in his earth,  
 With earth about him everywhere, despite  
 All fast and penance. Saw ye none be-  
 side,  
 None of your knights?'

'Yea so,' said Percivale:  
 'One night my pathway swerving east,  
 I saw  
 The pelican on the casque of our Sir Bors  
 All in the middle of the rising moon:  
 And toward him spurr'd, and hail'd him,  
 and he me,  
 And each made joy of either; then he  
 ask'd,  
 "Where is he? hast thou seen him—  
 Lancelot?—Once,"  
 Said good Sir Bors, "he dash'd across  
 me—mad,  
 And maddening what he rode: and when  
 I cried,  
 'Ridest thou then so hotly on a quest  
 So holy,' Lancelot shouted, 'Stay me not!  
 I have been the sluggard, and I ride  
 apace,  
 For now there is a lion in the way.'  
 So vanish'd."

'Then Sir Bors had ridden on  
 Softly, and sorrowing for our Lancelot,  
 Because his former madness, once the  
 talk  
 And scandal of our table, had return'd;  
 For Lancelot's kith and kin so worship  
 him  
 That ill to him is ill to them; to Bors  
 Beyond the rest: he well had been con-  
 tent  
 Not to have seen, so Lancelot might  
 have seen,  
 The Holy Cup of healing; and, indeed,  
 Being so clouded with his grief and love,  
 Small heart was his after the Holy Quest:  
 If God would send the vision, well: if not,  
 The Quest and he were in the hands of  
 Heaven.

'And then, with small adventure met,  
 Sir Bors  
 Rode to the lonest tract of all the realm,

And found a people there among their  
 crags,  
 Our race and blood, a remnant that were  
 left  
 Paynim amid their circles, and the stones  
 They pitch up straight to heaven: and  
 their wise men  
 Were strong in that old magic which  
 can trace  
 The wandering of the stars, and scoff'd at  
 him  
 And this high Quest as at a simple thing:  
 Told him he follow'd — almost Arthur's  
 words —  
 A mocking fire: "What other fire than  
 he,  
 Whereby the blood beats, and the blossom  
 blows,  
 And the sea rolls, and all the world is  
 warm'd?"  
 And when his answer chafed them, the  
 rough crowd,  
 Hearing he had a difference with their  
 priests,  
 Seized him, and bound and plunged him  
 into a cell  
 Of great piled stones; and lying bounden  
 there  
 In darkness thro' innumerable hours  
 He heard the hollow-ringing heavens  
 sweep  
 Over him till by miracle — what else? —  
 Heavy as it was, a great stone slipt and  
 fell,  
 Such as no wind could move: and thro'  
 the gap  
 Glimmer'd the streaming scud: then  
 came a night  
 Still as the day was loud; and thro' the  
 gap  
 The seven clear stars of Arthur's Table  
 Round —  
 For, brother, so one night, because they  
 roll  
 Thro' such a round in heaven, we named  
 the stars,  
 Rejoicing in ourselves and in our King —  
 And these, like bright eyes of familiar  
 friends,  
 In on him shone: "And then to me, to  
 me,"  
 Said good Sir Bors, "beyond all hopes  
 of mine,

Who scarce had pray'd or ask'd it for  
 myself —  
 Across the seven clear stars — O grace to  
 me —  
 In colour like the fingers of a hand  
 Before a burning taper, the sweet Grail  
 Glided and past, and close upon it peal'd  
 A sharp quick thunder." Afterwards, a  
 maid,  
 Who kept our holy faith among her kin  
 In secret, entering, loosed and let him  
 go.'

To whom the monk: 'And I remember  
 now  
 That pelican on the casque: Sir Bors it  
 was  
 Who spake so low and sadly at our  
 board;  
 And mighty reverent at our grace was he:  
 A square-set man and honest; and his  
 eyes,  
 An out-door sign of all the warmth within,  
 Smiled with his lips — a smile beneath a  
 cloud,  
 But heaven had meant it for a sunny one:  
 Ay, ay, Sir Bors, who else? But when  
 ye reach'd  
 The city, found ye all your knights re-  
 turn'd,  
 Or was there sooth in Arthur's prophecy,  
 Tell me, and what said each, and what  
 the King?'

Then answer'd Percivale: 'And that  
 can I,  
 Brother, and truly; since the living  
 words  
 Of so great men as Lancelot and our  
 King  
 Pass not from door to door and out  
 again,  
 But sit within the house. O, when we  
 reach'd  
 The city, our horses stumbling as they  
 trode  
 On heaps of ruin, hornless unicorns,  
 Crack'd basilisks, and splinter'd cocka-  
 trices,  
 And shatter'd talbots, which had left the  
 stones  
 Raw, that they fell from, brought us to  
 the hall.

'And there sat Arthur on the dais-  
throne,  
And those that had gone out upon the  
Quest,  
Wasted and worn, and but a tithe of  
them,  
And those that had not, stood before the  
King,  
Who, when he saw me, rose, and bade me  
hail,  
Saying, "A welfare in thine eye reproves  
Our fear of some disastrous chance for  
thee  
On hill, or plain, at sea, or flooding  
ford.  
So fierce a gale made havoc here of late  
Among the strange devices of our kings;  
Yea, shook this newer, stronger hall of  
ours,  
And from the statue Merlin moulded for  
us  
Half-wrench'd a golden wing; but now —  
the Quest,  
This vision — hast thou seen the Holy  
Cup,  
That Joseph brought of old to Glaston-  
bury?"

'So when I told him all thyself hast  
heard,  
Ambrosius, and my fresh but fixt resolve  
To pass away into the quiet life,  
He answer'd not, but, sharply turning,  
ask'd  
Of Gawain, "Gawain, was this Quest for  
thee?"

"Nay, lord," said Gawain, "not for  
such as I.  
Therefore I communed with a saintly  
man,  
Who made me sure the Quest was not  
for me;  
For I was much awearied of the Quest:  
But found a silk pavilion in a field,  
And merry maidens in it; and then this  
gale  
Tore my pavilion from the tenting-pin,  
And blew my merry maidens all about  
With all discomfort; yea, and but for  
this,  
My twelvemonth and a day were pleasant  
to me."

'He ceased; and Arthur turn'd to  
whom at first  
He saw not, for Sir Bors, on entering,  
push'd  
Athwart the throng to Lancelot, caught  
his hand,  
Held it, and there, half-hidden by him,  
stood,  
Until the King espied him, saying to him,  
"Hail, Bors! if ever loyal man and true  
Could see it, thou hast seen the Grail;"  
and Bors,  
"Ask me not, for I may not speak of it:  
I saw it;" and the tears were in his eyes.

'Then there remain'd but Lancelot,  
for the rest  
Spake but of sundry perils in the storm;  
Perhaps, like him of Cana in Holy Writ,  
Our Arthur kept his best until the last;  
"Thou, too, my Lancelot," ask'd the  
King, "my friend,  
Our mightiest, hath this Quest avail'd for  
thee?"

"Our mightiest!" answer'd Lancelot,  
with a groan;  
"O King!" — and when he paused, me-  
thought I spied  
A dying fire of madness in his eyes —  
"O King, my friend, if friend of thine I  
be,  
Happier are those that welter in their  
sin,  
Swine in the mud, that cannot see for  
slime,  
Slime of the ditch: but in me lived a sin  
So strange, of such a kind, that all of pure,  
Noble, and knightly in me twined and  
clung  
Round that one sin, until the wholesome  
flower  
And poisonous grew together, each as  
each,  
Not to be pluck'd asunder; and when thy  
knights  
Sware, I swear with them only in the  
hope  
That could I touch or see the Holy Grail  
They might be pluck'd asunder. Then I  
spake  
To one most holy saint, who wept and  
said,

That save they could be pluck'd asunder,  
all

My quest were but in vain; to whom I  
vow'd

That I would work according as he will'd.  
And forth I went, and while I yearn'd  
and strove

To tear the twain asunder in my heart,  
My madness came upon me as of old,  
And whipt me into waste fields far away;  
There was I beaten down by little men,  
Mean knights, to whom the moving of  
my sword

And shadow of my spear had been enow  
To scare them from me once; and then  
I came

All in my folly to the naked shore,  
Wide flats, where nothing but coarse  
grasses grew;

But such a blast, my King, began to blow,  
So loud a blast along the shore and sea,  
Ye could not hear the waters for the blast,  
Tho' heapt in mounds and ridges all the  
sea

Drove like a cataract, and all the sand  
Swept like a river, and the clouded  
heavens

Were shaken with the motion and the  
sound.

And blackening in the sea-foam sway'd a  
boat,

Half-swallow'd in it, anchor'd with a  
chain;

And in my madness to myself I said,  
'I will embark and I will lose myself,  
And in the great sea wash away my  
sin.'

I burst the chain, I sprang into the boat.  
Seven days I drove along the dreary deep,  
And with me drove the moon and all the  
stars;

And the wind fell, and on the seventh  
night

I heard the shingle grinding in the surge,  
And felt the boat shock earth, and look-  
ing up,

Behold, the enchanted towers of Car-  
bonek,

A castle like a rock upon a rock,  
With chasm-like portals open to the sea,  
And steps that met the breaker! there  
was none

Stood near it but a lion on each side

That kept the entry, and the moon was  
full.

Then from the boat I leapt, and up the  
stairs.

There drew my sword. With sudden-  
flaring manes

Those two great beasts rose upright like  
a man,

Each gript a shoulder, and I stood  
between;

And, when I would have smitten them,  
heard a voice,

'Doubt not, go forward; if thou doubt,  
the beasts

Will tear thee piçemeal.' Then with  
violence

The sword was dash'd from out my hand,  
and fell.

And up into the sounding hall I past;  
But nothing in the sounding hall I saw,  
No bench nor table, painting on the wall  
Or shield of knight; only the rounded  
moon

Thro' the tall oriel on the rolling sea.  
But always in the quiet house I heard,  
Clear as a lark, high o'er me as a lark,  
A sweet voice singing in the topmost  
tower

To the eastward: up I climb'd a thousand  
steps

With pain: as in a dream I seem'd to  
climb

For ever: at the last I reach'd a door,  
A light was in the crannies, and I heard,  
'Glory and joy and honour to our Lord  
And to the Holy Vessel of the Grail.'

Then in my madness I essay'd the door;  
It gave; and thro' a stormy glare, a heat  
As from a seventimes-heated furnace, I,  
Blasted and burnt, and blinded as I was,  
With such a fierceness that I swoon'd  
away —

O, yet methought I saw the Holy Grail,  
All pall'd in crimson samite, and around  
Great angels, awful shapes, and wings  
and eyes.

And but for all my madness and my sin,  
And then my swooning, I had sworn I  
saw

That which I saw; but what I saw was  
veil'd

And cover'd; and this Quest was not for  
me."

'So speaking, and here ceasing, Lancelot left  
 The hall long silent, till Sir Gawain — nay,  
 Brother, I need not tell thee foolish words, —  
 A reckless and irreverent knight was he,  
 Now bolden'd by the silence of his King, —  
 Well, I will tell thee: "O King, my liege," he said,  
 "Hath Gawain fail'd in any quest of thine?  
 When have I stinted stroke in foughten field?  
 But as for thine, my good friend Percivale,  
 Thy holy nun and thou have driven men mad,  
 Yea, made our mightiest madder than our least.  
 But by mine eyes and by mine ears I swear,  
 I will be deafer than the blue-eyed cat,  
 And thrice as blind as any noonday owl,  
 To holy virgins in their ecstasies,  
 Henceforward."

"Deafer," said the blameless King,  
 "Gawain, and blinder unto holy things  
 Hope not to make thyself by idle vows,  
 Being too blind to have desire to see.  
 But if indeed there came a sign from heaven,  
 Blessed are Bors, Lancelot and Percivale,  
 For these have seen according to their sight.  
 For every fiery prophet in old times,  
 And all the sacred madness of the bard,  
 When God made music thro' them, could but speak  
 His music by the framework and the chord;  
 And as ye saw it ye have spoken truth.

"Nay — but thou errest, Lancelot: never yet  
 Could all of true and noble in knight and man  
 Twine round one sin, whatever it might be,  
 With such a closeness, but apart there grew,  
 Save that he were the swine thou spakest of,

Some root of knighthood and pure nobleness;  
 Whereto see thou, that it may bear its flower.

"And spake I not too truly, O my knights?  
 Was I too dark a prophet when I said  
 To those who went upon the Holy Quest,  
 That most of them would follow wandering fires,  
 Lost in the quagmire? — lost to me and gone,  
 And left me gazing at a barren board,  
 And a lean Order — scarce return'd a tithe —  
 And out of those to whom the vision came  
 My greatest hardly will believe he saw;  
 Another hath beheld it afar off,  
 And leaving human wrongs to right themselves,  
 Cares but to pass into the silent life.  
 And one hath had the vision face to face,  
 And now his chair desires him here in vain,  
 However they may crown him elsewhere.

"And some among you held, that if the King  
 Had seen the sight he would have sworn the vow:  
 Not easily, seeing that the King must guard  
 That which he rules, and is but as the hind  
 To whom a space of land is given to plow.  
 Who may not wander from the allotted field  
 Before his work be done; but, being done,  
 Let visions of the night or of the day  
 Come, as they will; and many a time they come,  
 Until this earth he walks on seems not earth,  
 This light that strikes his eyeball is not light,  
 This air that smites his forehead is not air  
 But vision — yea, his very hand and foot —  
 In moments when he feels he cannot die,  
 And knows himself no vision to himself,



Nor the high God a vision, nor that One  
Who rose again: ye have seen what ye  
have seen."

'So spake the King: I knew not all  
he meant.'

## PELLEAS AND ETTARRE.

KING ARTHUR made new knights to fill  
the gap

Left by the Holy Quest; and as he sat  
In hall at old Caerleon, the high doors  
Were softly sunder'd, and thro' these a  
youth,

Pelleas, and the sweet smell of the fields  
Past, and the sunshine came along with  
him.

'Make me thy knight, because I know,  
Sir King,  
All that belongs to knighthood, and I love.'  
Such was his cry: for having heard the  
King

Had let proclaim a tournament — the prize  
A golden circlet and a knightly sword,  
Full fain had Pelleas for his lady won  
The golden circlet, for himself the sword:  
And there were those who knew him near  
the King,

And promised for him: and Arthur made  
him knight.

And this new knight, Sir Pelleas of the  
isles —

But lately come to his inheritance,  
And lord of many a barren isle was he —  
Riding at noon, a day or twain before,  
Across the forest call'd of Dean, to find  
Caerleon and the King, had felt the sun  
Beat like a strong knight on his helm,  
and reel'd

Almost to falling from his horse; but  
saw

Near him a mound of even-sloping side,  
Whereon a hundred stately beeches grew,  
And here and there great hollies under  
them;

But for a mile all round was open space,  
And fern and heath: and slowly Pelleas  
drew

To that dim day, then binding his good  
horse

To a tree, cast himself down; and as he  
lay

At random looking over the brown earth  
Thro' that green-glooming twilight of the  
grove,

It seem'd to Pelleas that the fern without  
Burnt as a living fire of emeralds,  
So that his eyes were dazzled looking at it.  
Then o'er it crost the dimness of a cloud  
Floating, and once the shadow of a bird  
Flying, and then a fawn; and his eyes  
closed.

And since he loved all maidens, but no  
maid

In special, half-awake he whisper'd,  
'Where?

O where? I love thee, tho' I know thee  
not.

For fair thou art and pure as Guinevere,  
And I will make thee with my spear and  
sword

As famous — O my Queen, my Guinevere,  
For I will be thine Arthur when we  
meet.'

Suddenly waken'd with a sound of talk  
And laughter at the limit of the wood,  
And glancing thro' the hoary boles, he saw,  
Strange as to some old prophet might  
have seem'd

A vision hovering on a sea of fire,  
Damsels in divers colours like the cloud  
Of sunset and sunrise, and all of them  
On horses, and the horses richly trapt  
Breast-high in that bright line of bracken  
stood:

And all the damsels talk'd confusedly,  
And one was pointing this way, and one  
that,

Because the way was lost.

And Pelleas rose,  
And loosed his horse, and led him to the  
light.

There she that seem'd the chief among  
them said,

'In happy time behold our pilot-star!  
Youth, we are damsels-errant, and we ride,  
Arm'd as ye see, to tilt against the knights  
There at Caerleon, but have lost our way:  
To right? to left? straight forward? back  
again?

Which? tell us quickly.'

Pelleas gazing thought,  
 'Is Guinevere herself so beautiful?'  
 For large her violet eyes look'd, and her  
 bloom  
 A rosy dawn kindled in stainless heavens,  
 And round her limbs, mature in woman-  
 hood;  
 And slender was her hand and small her  
 shape;  
 And but for those large eyes, the haunts  
 of scorn,  
 She might have seem'd a toy to trifle with,  
 And pass and care no more. But while  
 he gazed  
 The beauty of her flesh abash'd the boy,  
 As tho' it were the beauty of her soul:  
 For as the base man, judging of the good,  
 Puts his own baseness in him by default  
 Of will and nature, so did Pelleas lend  
 All the young beauty of his own soul to  
 hers,  
 Believing her; and when she spake to  
 him,  
 Stammer'd, and could not make her a  
 reply.  
 For out of the waste islands had he come,  
 Where saving his own sisters he had  
 known  
 Scarce any but the women of his isles,  
 Rough wives, that laugh'd and scream'd  
 against the gulls,  
 Makers of nets, and living from the sea.

Then with a slow smile turn'd the lady  
 round  
 And look'd upon her people, and as  
 when  
 A stone is flung into some sleeping tarn,  
 The circle widens till it lip the marge,  
 Spread the slow smile thro' all her com-  
 pany.  
 Three knights were thereamong; and  
 they too smiled,  
 Scorning him; for the lady was Ettarre,  
 And she was a great lady in her land.

Again she said, 'O wild and of the  
 woods,  
 Knowest thou not the fashion of our  
 speech?  
 Or have the Heavens but given thee a fair  
 face,  
 Lacking a tongue?'

'O damsel,' answer'd he,  
 'I woke from dreams; and coming out  
 of gloom  
 Was dazzled by the sudden light, and  
 crave  
 Pardon: but will ye to Caerleon? I  
 Go likewise: shall I lead you to the King?'

'Lead then,' she said; and thro' the  
 woods they went.  
 And while they rode, the meaning in his  
 eyes,  
 His tenderness of manner, and chaste awe,  
 His broken utterances and bashfulness,  
 Were all a burthen to her, and in her  
 heart  
 She mutter'd, 'I have lighted on a fool,  
 Raw, yet so stale!' But since her mind  
 was bent  
 On hearing, after trumpet blown, her name  
 And title, 'Queen of Beauty,' in the lists  
 Cried — and beholding him so strong, she  
 thought  
 That peradventure he will fight for me,  
 And win the circlet: therefore flatter'd  
 him,  
 Being so gracious, that he wellnigh  
 deem'd  
 His wish by hers was echo'd; and her  
 knights  
 And all her damsels too were gracious to  
 him,  
 For she was a great lady.

And when they reach'd  
 Caerleon, ere they past to lodging, she,  
 Taking his hand, 'O the strong hand,'  
 she said,  
 'See! look at mine! but wilt thou fight  
 for me,  
 And win me this fine circlet, Pelleas,  
 That I may love thee?'

Then his helpless heart  
 Leapt, and he cried, 'Ay! wilt thou if I  
 win?'  
 'Ay, that will I,' she answer'd, and she  
 laugh'd,  
 And straitly nipt the hand, and flung it  
 from her;  
 Then glanced askew at those three knights  
 of hers,  
 Till all her ladies laugh'd along with her.

'O happy world,' thought Pelleas, 'all, meseems,  
Are happy; I the happiest of them all.'  
Nor slept that night for pleasure in his  
blood,  
And green wood-ways, and eyes among  
the leaves;  
Then being on the morrow knighted,  
sware  
To love one only. And as he came away,  
The men who met him rounded on their  
heels  
And wonder'd after him because his face  
Shone like the countenance of a priest of  
old  
Against the flame about a sacrifice  
Kindled by fire from heaven: so glad  
was he.

Then Arthur made vast banquets, and  
strange knights  
From the four winds came in: and each  
one sat,  
Tho' served with choice from air, land,  
stream, and sea,  
Oft in mid-banquet measuring with his  
eyes  
His neighbour's make and might: and  
Pelleas look'd  
Noble among the noble, for he dream'd  
His lady loved him, and he knew himself  
Loved of the King: and him his new-  
made knight  
Worshipt, whose lightest whisper moved  
him more  
Than all the ranged reasons of the world.

Then blush'd and brake the morning  
of the jousts,  
And this was call'd 'The Tournament of  
Youth:'  
For Arthur, loving his young knight,  
withheld  
His older and his mightier from the lists,  
That Pelleas might obtain his lady's love,  
According to her promise, and remain  
Lord of the tourney. And Arthur had  
the jousts  
Down in the flat field by the shore of Usk  
Holden: the gilded parapets were crown'd  
With faces, and the great tower fill'd with  
eyes  
Up to the summit, and the trumpets blew.

There all day long Sir Pelleas kept the  
field  
With honour: so by that strong hand of  
his  
The sword and golden circlet were  
achieved.

Then rang the shout his lady loved:  
the heat  
Of pride and glory fired her face; her  
eye  
Sparkled; she caught the circlet from his  
lance,  
And there before the people crown'd  
herself:  
So for the last time she was gracious to  
him.

Then at Caerleon for a space — her  
look  
Bright for all others, cloudier on her  
knight —  
Linger'd Ettarre: and seeing Pelleas  
droop,  
Said Guinevere, 'We marvel at thee  
much,  
O damsel, wearing this unsunny face  
To him who won thee glory!' and she  
said,  
'Had ye not held your Lancelot in your  
bower,  
My Queen, he had not won.' Whereat  
the Queen,  
As one whose foot is bitten by an ant,  
Glanced down upon her, turn'd and went  
her way.

But after, when her damsels, and her-  
self,  
And those three knights all set their  
faces home,  
Sir Pelleas follow'd. She that saw him  
cried,  
'Damsels — and yet I should be shamed  
to say it —  
I cannot bide Sir Baby. Keep him back  
Among yourselves. Would rather that  
we had  
Some rough old knight who knew the  
worldly way,  
Albeit grizzlier than a bear, to ride  
And jest with: take him to you, keep  
him off,

And pamper him with papmeat, if ye  
will,  
Old milky fables of the wolf and sheep,  
Such as the wholesome mothers tell their  
boys.  
Nay, should ye try him with a merry  
one  
To find his mettle, good: and if he fly  
us,  
Small matter! let him.' This her damsels  
heard,  
And mindful of her small and cruel hand,  
They, closing round him thro' the journey  
home,  
Acted her hest, and always from her  
side  
Restrain'd him with all manner of device,  
So that he could not come to speech  
with her.  
And when she gain'd her castle, upsprang  
the bridge,  
Down rang the grate of iron thro' the  
groove,  
And he was left alone in open field.

'These be the ways of ladies,' Pelleas  
thought,  
'To those who love them, trials of our  
faith.  
Yea, let her prove me to the uttermost,  
For loyal to the uttermost am I.'  
So made his moan; and, darkness falling,  
sought  
A priory not far off, there lodged, but  
rose  
With morning every day, and, moist or  
dry,  
Full-arm'd upon his charger all day long  
Sat by the walls, and no one open'd to  
him.

And this persistence turn'd her scorn  
to wrath.  
Then calling her three knights, she  
charged them, 'Out!  
And drive him from the walls.' And out  
they came,  
But Pelleas overthrew them as they  
dash'd  
Against him one by one; and these  
return'd,  
But still he kept his watch beneath the  
wall.

Thereon her wrath became a hate;  
and once,  
A week beyond, while walking on the  
walls  
With her three knights, she pointed  
downward, 'Look,  
He haunts me—I cannot breathe—  
besieges me;  
Down! strike him! put my hate into  
your strokes,  
And drive him from my walls.' And  
down they went,  
And Pelleas overthrew them one by one;  
And from the tower above him cried  
Ettarre,  
'Bind him, and bring him in.'

He heard her voice;  
Then let the strong hand, which had  
overthrown  
Her minion-knights, by those he over-  
threw  
Be bounden straight, and so they  
brought him in.

Then when he came before Ettarre,  
the sight  
Of her rich beauty made him at one  
glance  
More bondsman in his heart than in his  
bonds.  
'Yet with good cheer he spake, 'Behold  
me, Lady,  
A prisoner, and the vassal of thy will;  
And if thou keep me in the donjon  
here,  
Content am I so that I see thy face  
But once a day: for I have sworn my  
vows,  
And thou hast given thy promise, and I  
know  
That all these pains are trials of my faith,  
And that thyself, when thou hast seen  
me strain'd  
And sifted to the utmost, wilt at length  
Yield me thy love and know me for thy  
knight.'

Then she began to rail so bitterly,  
With all her damsels, he was stricken  
mute;  
But when she mock'd his vows and the  
great King,

Lighted on words: 'For pity of thine  
own self,  
Peace, Lady, peace: is he not thine and  
mine?'  
'Thou fool,' she said, 'I never heard his  
voice  
But long'd to break away. Unbind him  
now,  
And thrust him out of doors; for save he  
be  
Fool to the midmost marrow of his  
bones,  
He will return no more.' And those,  
her three,  
Laugh'd and unbound, and thrust him  
from the gate.

And after this, a week beyond, again  
She call'd them, saying, 'There he  
watches yet,  
There like a dog before his master's  
door!  
Kick'd, he returns: do ye not hate him,  
ye?  
Ye know yourselves: how can ye bide  
at peace,  
Affronted with his fulsome innocence?  
Are ye but creatures of the board and  
bed,  
No men to strike? Fall on him all at  
once,  
And if ye slay him I reckon not: if ye fail,  
Give ye the slave mine order to be  
bound,  
Bind him as heretofore, and bring him in:  
It may be ye shall slay him in his bonds.'

She spake; and at her will they  
couch'd their spears,  
Three against one: and Gawain passing  
by,  
Bound upon solitary adventure, saw  
Low down beneath the shadow of those  
towers  
A villainy, three to one: and thro' his  
heart  
The fire of honour and all noble deeds  
Flash'd, and he call'd, 'I strike upon thy  
side —  
The caitiffs!' 'Nay,' said Pelleas, 'but  
forbear;  
He needs no aid who doth his lady's  
will.'

So Gawain, looking at the villainy  
done,  
Forbore, but in his heat and eagerness  
Trembled and quiver'd, as the dog, with-  
held  
A moment from the vermin that he sees  
Before him, shivers, ere he springs and  
kills.

And Pelleas overthrew them, one to  
three;  
And they rose up, and bound, and  
brought him in.  
Then first her anger, leaving Pelleas,  
burn'd  
Full on her knights in many an evil name,  
Of craven, weakling, and thrice-beaten  
hound:  
'Yet, take him, ye that scarce are fit to  
touch,  
Far less to bind, your victor, and thrust  
him out,  
And let who will release him from his  
bonds.  
And if he comes again' — there she  
brake short;  
And Pelleas answer'd, 'Lady, for indeed  
I loved you and I deem'd you beautiful,  
I cannot brook to see your beauty marr'd  
Thro' evil spite: and if ye love me not,  
I cannot bear to dream you so forsworn:  
I had liefer ye were worthy of my love,  
Than to be loved again of you — fare-  
well;  
And tho' ye kill my hope, not yet my  
love,  
Vex not yourself: ye will not see me  
more.'

While thus he spake, she gazed upon  
the man  
Of princely bearing, tho' in bonds, and  
thought,  
'Why have I push'd him from me? this  
man loves,  
If love there be: yet him I loved not.  
Why?  
I deem'd him fool? yea, so? or that in  
him  
A something — was it nobler than my-  
self? —  
Seem'd my reproach? He is not of my  
kind.

He could not love me, did he know me  
 well.  
 Nay, let him go — and quickly.' And  
 her knights  
 Laugh'd not, but thrust him bounden out  
 of door.

Forth sprang Gawain, and loosed him  
 from his bonds,  
 And flung them o'er the walls; and  
 afterward,  
 Shaking his hands, as from a lazar's rag,  
 'Faith of my body,' he said, 'and art  
 thou not —  
 Yea thou art he, whom late our Arthur  
 made  
 Knight of his Table; yea and he that  
 won  
 The circlet? wherefore hast thou so  
 defamed  
 Thy brotherhood in me and all the rest,  
 As let these caitiffs on thee work their  
 will?'

And Pelleas answer'd, 'O, their wills  
 are hers  
 For whom I won the circlet; and mine,  
 hers,  
 Thus to be bounden, so to see her face,  
 Marr'd tho' it be with spite and mockery  
 now,  
 Other than when I found her in the  
 woods;  
 And tho' she hath me bounden but in  
 spite,  
 And all to flout me, when they bring me in,  
 Let me be bounden, I shall see her face;  
 Else must I die thro' mine unhappiness.'

And Gawain answer'd kindly tho' in  
 scorn,  
 'Why, let my lady bind me if she will,  
 And let my lady beat me if she will:  
 But an she send her delegate to thrall  
 These fighting hands of mine — Christ  
 kill me then  
 But I will slice him handless by the  
 wrist,  
 And let my lady sear the stump for him,  
 Howl as he may. But hold me for your  
 friend:  
 Come, ye know nothing: here I pledge  
 my troth,

Yea, by the honour of the Table Round,  
 I will be leal to thee and work thy work,  
 And tame thy jailing princess to thine  
 hand.  
 Lend me thine horse and arms, and I  
 will say  
 That I have slain thee. She will let me  
 in  
 To hear the manner of thy fight and fall;  
 Then, when I come within her counsels,  
 then  
 From prime to vespers will I chant thy  
 praise  
 As prowest knight and truest lover, more  
 Than any have sung thee living, till she  
 long  
 To have thee back in lusty life again,  
 Not to be bound, save by white bonds  
 and warm,  
 Dearer than freedom. Wherefore now  
 thy horse  
 And armour: let me go: be comforted:  
 Give me three days to melt her fancy,  
 and hope  
 The third night hence will bring thee  
 news of gold.'

Then Pelleas lent his horse and all his  
 arms,  
 Saving the goodly sword, his prize, and  
 took  
 Gawain's, and said, 'Betray me not, but  
 help —  
 Art thou not be whom men call light-of-  
 love?'

'Ay,' said Gawain, 'for women be so  
 light.'  
 Then bounded forward to the castle walls,  
 And raised a hugle hanging from his neck,  
 And winded it, and that so musically  
 That all the old echoes hidden in the  
 wall  
 Rang out like hollow woods at hunting-  
 tide.

Up ran a score of damsels to the tower;  
 'Avaunt,' they cried, 'our lady loves thee  
 not.'  
 But Gawain lifting up his vizor said,  
 'Gawain am I, Gawain of Arthur's court,  
 And I have slain this Pelleas whom ye  
 hate:



Behold his horse and armour. Open  
gates,  
And I will make you merry.'

And down they ran,  
Her damsels, crying to their lady, 'Lo!  
Pelleas is dead — he told us — he that hath  
His horse and armour: will ye let him in?  
He slew him! Gawain, Gawain of the  
court,  
Sir Gawain — there he waits below the  
wall,  
Blowing his bugle as who should say him  
nay.'

And so, leave given, straight on thro'  
open door  
Rode Gawain, whom she greeted courte-  
ously.  
'Dead, is it so?' she ask'd. 'Ay, ay,'  
said he,  
'And oft in dying cried upon your name.'  
'Pity on him,' she answer'd, 'a good  
knight,  
But never let me bide one hour at peace.'  
'Ay,' thought Gawain, 'and you be fair  
enow:  
But I to your dead man have given my  
troth,  
That whom ye loathe, him will I make  
you love.'

So those three days, aimless about the  
land,  
Lost in a doubt, Pelleas wandering  
Waited, until the third night brought a  
moon  
With promise of large light on woods and  
ways.

Hot was the night and silent; but a  
sound  
Of Gawain ever coming, and this lay —  
Which Pelleas had heard sung before the  
Queen,  
And seen her sadden listening — vext his  
heart,  
And marr'd his rest — 'A worm within  
the rose.'

'A rose, but one, none other rose had I,  
A rose, one rose, and this was wondrous  
fair,

One rose a rose that gladden'd earth and  
sky,  
One rose, my rose, that sweeten'd all  
mine air —  
I cared not for the thorns; the thorns  
were there.

'One rose, a rose to gather by and by,  
One rose, a rose to gather and to wear,  
No rose but one — what other rose had I?  
One rose, my rose; a rose that will not  
die, —  
He dies who loves it, — if the worm be  
there.'

This tender rhyme, and evermore the  
doubt,  
'Why lingers Gawain with his golden  
news?'  
So shook him that he could not rest, but  
rode  
Ere midnight to her walls, and bound his  
horse  
Hard by the gates. Wide open were the  
gates,  
And no watch kept; and in thro' these  
he past,  
And heard but his own steps, and his  
own heart  
Beating, for nothing moved but his own  
self,  
And his own shadow. Then he crost the  
court,  
And spied not any light in hall or bower,  
But saw the postern portal also wide  
Yawning; and up a slope of garden, all  
Of roses white and red, and brambles mixt  
And overgrowing them, went on, and  
found,  
Here too, all hush'd below the mellow  
moon,  
Save that one rivulet from a tiny cave  
Came lightening downward, and so spilt  
itself  
Among the roses, and was lost again.

Then was he ware of three pavilions  
rear'd  
Above the bushes, gilden-peakt: in one,  
Red after revel, droned her lurdane  
knights  
Slumbering, and their three squires across  
their feet:

In one, their malice on the placid lip  
Froz'n by sweet sleep, four of her damsels  
lay:

And in the third, the circlet of the jousts  
Bound on her brow, were Gawain and  
Ettarre.

Back, as a hand that pushes thro' the  
leaf

To find a nest and feels a snake, he  
drew:

Back, as a coward slinks from what he  
fears

To cope with, or a traitor proven or hound  
Beaten, did Pelleas in an utter shame

Creep with his shadow thro' the court  
again,

Fingering at his sword-handle until he  
stood

There on the castle-bridge once more, and  
thought,

'I will go back, and slay them where they  
lie.'

And so went back, and seeing them yet  
in sleep

Said, 'Ye, that so dishallow the holy  
sleep,

Your sleep is death,' and drew the sword,  
and thought,

'What! slay a sleeping knight? the King  
hath bound

And sworn me to this brotherhood;'  
again,

'Alas that ever a knight should be so  
false.'

Then turn'd, and so return'd, and groan-  
ing laid

The naked sword athwart their naked  
throats

There left it, and them sleeping; and she  
lay,

The circlet of the tourney round her  
brows,

And the sword of the tourney across her  
throat.

And forth he past, and mounting on  
his horse

Stared at her towers that, larger than  
themselves

In their own darkness, throng'd into the  
moon.

Then crush'd the saddle with his thighs,  
and clench'd

His hands, and madden'd with himself  
and moan'd:

'Would they have risen against me in  
their blood

At the last day? I might have answer'd  
them

Even before high God. O towers so  
strong,

Huge, solid, would that even while I gaze  
The crack of earthquake shivering to your

base

Split you, and Hell burst up your harlot  
roofs

Bellowing, and charr'd you thro' and  
thro' within,

Black as the harlot's heart — hollow as a  
skull!

Let the fierce east scream thro' your eye-  
let-holes,

And whirl the dust of harlots round and  
round

In dung and nettles! hiss, snake — I saw  
him there —

Let the fox bark, let the wolf yell. Who  
yells

Here in the still sweet summer night, but  
I —

I, the poor Pelleas whom she call'd her  
fool?

Fool, beast — he, she, or I? myself most  
fool;

Beast too, as lacking human wit — dis-  
graced,

Dishonour'd all for trial of true love —  
Love? — we be all alike: only the King

Hath made us fools and liars. O noble  
vows!

O great and sane and simple race of  
brutes

That own no lust because they have no  
law!

For why should I have loved her to my  
shame?

I loathe her, as I loved her to my shame.  
I never loved her, I but lusted for her —  
Away —'

He dash'd the rowel into his horse,  
And bounded forth and vanish'd thro'

the night.

Then she, that felt the cold touch on  
her throat,  
Awaking knew the sword, and turn'd  
herself  
To Gawain: 'Liar, for thou hast not slain  
This Pelleas! here he stood, and might  
have slain  
Me and thyself.' And he that tells the  
tale  
Says that her ever-veering fancy turn'd  
To Pelleas, as the one true knight on  
earth,  
And only lover; and thro' her love her  
life  
Wasted and pined, desiring him in vain.

But he by wild and way, for half the  
night,  
And over hard and soft, striking the sod  
From out the soft, the spark from off the  
hard,  
Rode till the star above the wakening sun,  
Beside that tower where Percivale was  
cowl'd,  
Glanced from the rosy forehead of the  
dawn.  
For so the words were flash'd into his  
heart  
He knew not whence or wherefore: 'O  
sweet star,  
Pure on the virgin forehead of the dawn!  
And there he would have wept, but felt  
his eyes  
Harder and drier than a fountain bed  
In summer: thither came the village girls  
And linger'd talking, and they come no  
more  
Till the sweet heavens have fill'd it from  
the heights  
Again with living waters in the change  
Of seasons: hard his eyes; harder his  
heart  
Seem'd; but so weary were his limbs,  
that he,  
Gasping, 'Of Arthur's hall am I, but here,  
Here let me rest and die,' cast himself  
down,  
And gulf'd his griefs in inmost sleep; so  
lay,  
Till shaken by a dream, that Gawain fired  
The hall of Merlin, and the morning star  
Reel'd in the smoke, brake into flame,  
and fell.

He woke, and being ware of some one  
nigh,  
Sent hands upon him, as to tear him,  
crying,  
'False! and I held thee pure as Guine-  
vere.'

But Percivale stood near him and  
replied,  
'Am I but false as Guinevere is pure?  
Or art thou mazed with dreams? or being  
one  
Of our free-spoken Table hast not heard  
That Lancelot'—there he check'd him-  
self and paused.

Then fared it with Sir Pelleas as with  
one  
Who gets a wound in battle, and the sword  
That made it plunges thro' the wound  
again,  
And pricks it deeper: and he shrank and  
wail'd,  
'Is the Queen false?' and Percivale was  
mute.  
'Have any of our Round Table held their  
vows?'  
And Percivale made answer not a word.  
'Is the King true?' 'The King!' said  
Percivale.  
'Why then let men couple at once with  
wolves.  
What! art thou mad?'

But Pelleas, leaping up,  
Ran thro' the doors and vaulted on his  
horse  
And fled: small pity upon his horse had  
he,  
Or on himself, or any, and when he met  
A cripple, one that held a hand for alms—  
Hunch'd as he was, and like an old dwarf-  
elm  
That turns its back on the salt blast, the  
boy  
Paused not, but overrode him, shouting,  
'False,  
And false with Gawain!' and so left him  
bruised  
And batter'd, and fled on, and hill and  
wood  
Went ever streaming by him till the gloom,  
That follows on the turning of the world,

Darken'd the common path : he twitch'd  
 the reins,  
 And made his beast that better knew it,  
 swerve  
 Now off it and now on; but when he saw  
 High up in heaven the hall that Merlin  
 built,  
 Blackening against the dead-green stripes  
 of even,  
 'Black nest of rats,' he groan'd, 'ye build  
 too high.'

Not long thereafter from the city gates  
 Issued Sir Lancelot riding airily,  
 Warm with a gracious parting from the  
 Queen,  
 Peace at his heart, and gazing at a star  
 And marvelling what it was: on whom  
 the boy,  
 Across the silent seeded meadow-grass  
 Borne, clash'd: and Lancelot, saying,  
 'What name hast thou  
 That ridest here so blindly and so hard?'  
 'No name, no name,' he shouted, 'a  
 scourge am I  
 To lash the treasons of the Table Round.'  
 'Yea, but thy name?' 'I have many  
 names,' he cried:  
 'I am wrath and shame and hate and evil  
 fame,  
 And like a poisonous wind I pass to  
 blast  
 And blaze the crime of Lancelot and the  
 Queen.'  
 'First over me,' said Lancelot, 'shalt  
 thou pass.'  
 'Fight therefore,' yell'd the youth, and  
 either knight  
 Drew back a space, and when they closed,  
 at once  
 The weary steed of Pelleas floundering  
 flung  
 His rider, who call'd out from the dark  
 field,  
 'Thou art false as Hell: slay me: I have  
 no sword.'  
 Then Lancelot, 'Yea, between thy lips—  
 and sharp;  
 But here will I disedge it by thy death.'  
 'Slay then,' he shriek'd, 'my will is to be  
 slain,'  
 And Lancelot, with his heel upon the  
 fall'n,

Rolling his eyes, a moment stood, then  
 spake:  
 'Rise, weakling; I am Lancelot; say thy  
 say.'

And Lancelot slowly rode his warhorse  
 back  
 To Camelot, and Sir Pelleas in brief  
 while  
 Caught his unbroken limbs from the dark  
 field,  
 And follow'd to the city. It chanced  
 that both  
 Brake into hall together, worn and pale.  
 There with her knights and dames was  
 Guinevere.  
 Full wonderingly she gazed on Lancelot  
 So soon return'd, and then on Pelleas,  
 him  
 Who had not greeted her, but cast him-  
 self  
 Down on a bench, hard-breathing. 'Have  
 ye fought?'  
 She ask'd of Lancelot. 'Ay, my Queen,'  
 he said.  
 'And hast thou overthrown him?' 'Ay,  
 my Queen.'  
 Then she, turning to Pelleas, 'O young  
 knight,  
 Hath the great heart of knighthood in  
 thee fail'd  
 So far thou canst not bide, unfrowardly,  
 A fall from *him*?' Then, for he answer'd  
 not,  
 'Or hast thou other griefs? If I, the  
 Queen,  
 May help them, loose thy tongue, and let  
 me know.'  
 But Pelleas lifted up an eye so fierce  
 She quail'd; and he, hissing, 'I have no  
 sword,'  
 Sprang from the door into the dark.  
 The Queen  
 Look'd hard upon her lover, he on her;  
 And each foresaw the dolorous day to  
 be:  
 And all talk died, as in a grove all song  
 Beneath the shadow of some bird of  
 prey;  
 Then a long silence came upon the  
 hall,  
 And Modred thought, 'The time is hard  
 at hand.'

## THE LAST TOURNAMENT.

DAGONET, the fool, whom Gawain in his mood  
 Had made mock-knight of Arthur's Table Round,  
 At Camelot, high above the yellowing woods,  
 Danced like a wither'd leaf before the hall.  
 And toward him from the hall, with harp in hand,  
 And from the crown thereof a carcanet  
 Of ruby swaying to and fro, the prize  
 Of Tristram in the jousts of yesterday,  
 Came Tristram, saying, 'Why skip ye so,  
 Sir Fool?'

For Arthur and Sir Lancelot riding once  
 Far down beneath a winding wall of rock  
 Heard a child wail. A stump of oak half-dead,  
 From roots like some black coil of carven snakes,  
 Clutch'd at the crag, and started thro' mid air  
 Bearing an eagle's nest: and thro' the tree  
 Rush'd ever a rainy wind, and thro' the wind  
 Pierced ever a child's cry: and crag and tree  
 Scaling, Sir Lancelot from the perilous nest,  
 This ruby necklace thrice around her neck,  
 And all unscarr'd from beak or talon, brought  
 A maiden babe; which Arthur pitying took,  
 Then gave it to his Queen to rear: the Queen  
 But coldly acquiescing, in her white arms  
 Received, and after loved it tenderly,  
 And named it Nestling; so forgot herself  
 A moment, and her cares; till that young life  
 Being smitten in mid heaven with mortal cold  
 Past from her; and in time the carcanet  
 Vext her with plaintive memories of the child:  
 So she, delivering it to Arthur, said,

'Take thou the jewels of this dead innocence,  
 And make them, an thou wilt, a tourney-prize.'

To whom the King, 'Peace to thine eagle-borne  
 Dead nestling, and this honour after death,  
 Following thy will! but, O my Queen,  
 I muse  
 Why ye not wear on arm, or neck, or zone  
 Those diamonds that I rescued from the tarn,  
 And Lancelot won, methought, for thee to wear.'

'Would rather you had let them fall,' she cried,  
 'Plunge and be lost—ill-fated as they were,  
 A bitterness to me!—ye look amazed,  
 Not knowing they were lost as soon as given—  
 Slid from my hands, when I was leaning out  
 Above the river—that unhappy child  
 Past in her barge: but rosier luck will go  
 With these rich jewels, seeing that they came  
 Not from the skeleton of a brother-slayer,  
 But the sweet body of a maiden babe.  
 Perchance—who knows?—the purest of thy knights  
 May win them for the purest of my maids.'

She ended, and the cry of a great jousts  
 With trumpet-blowings ran on all the ways  
 From Camelot in among the faded fields  
 To furthest towers; and everywhere the knights  
 Arm'd for a day of glory before the King.

But on the hither side of that loud morn  
 Into the hall stagger'd, his visage ribb'd  
 From ear to ear with dogwhip-weals, his nose

Bridge-broken, one eye out, and one  
hand off,  
And one with shatter'd fingers dangling  
lame,  
A churl, to whom indignantly the King,

'My churl, for whom Christ died, what  
evil beast  
Hath drawn his claws athwart thy face?  
or fiend?  
Man was it who marr'd heaven's image  
in thee thus?'

Then, sputtering thro' the hedge of  
splinter'd teeth,  
Yet strangers to the tongue, and with  
blunt stump  
Pitch-blacken'd sawing the air, said the  
maim'd churl,

'He took them and he drave them to  
his tower—  
Some hold he was a table-knight of  
thine—  
A hundred goodly ones—the Red Knight,  
he—

Lord, I was tending swine, and the Red  
Knight  
Brake in upon me and drave them to his  
tower;

And when I call'd upon thy name as one  
That doest right by gentle and by churl,  
Maim'd me and maul'd, and would out-  
right have slain,

Save that he sware me to a message,  
saying,

"Tell thou the King and all his liars,  
that I

Have founded my Round Table in the  
North,

And whatsoever his own knights have  
sworn

My knights have sworn the counter to  
it—and say

My tower is full of harlots, like his court,  
But mine are worthier, seeing they profess  
To be none other than themselves—and  
say

My knights are all adulterers like his  
own,

But mine are truer, seeing they profess  
To be none other; and say his hour is  
come,

The heathen are upon him, his long lance  
Broken, and his Excalibur a straw."

Then Arthur turn'd to Kay the senes-  
chal,  
'Take thou my churl, and tend him  
curiously  
Like a king's heir, till all his hurts be  
whole.

The heathen—but that ever-climbing  
wave,  
Hurl'd back again so often in empty foam,  
Hath lain for years at rest—and rene-  
gades,

Thieves, bandits, leavings of confusion,  
whom

The wholesome realm is purged of other-  
where,

Friends, thro' your manhood and your  
fealty,—now

Make their last head like Satan in the  
North.

My younger knights, new-made, in whom  
your flower

Waits to be solid fruit of golden deeds,  
Move with me toward their quelling,  
which achieved,

The loneliest ways are safe from shore to  
shore.

But thou, Sir Lancelot, sitting in my place  
Enchain'd to-morrow, arbitrate the field;  
For wherefore shouldst thou care to  
mingle with it,

Only to yield my Queen her own again?  
Speak, Lancelot, thou art silent: is it  
well?'

Thereto Sir Lancelot answer'd, 'It is  
well:

Yet better if the King abide, and leave  
The leading of his younger knights to me.  
Else, for the King has will'd it, it is well.'

Then Arthur rose and Lancelot follow'd  
him,

And while they stood without the doors,  
the King

Turn'd to him saying, 'Is it then so well?  
Or mine the blame that oft I seem as he  
Of whom was written, "A sound is in his  
ears"?'

The foot that loiters, bidden go,—the  
glance



That only seems half-loyal to command, —  
A manner somewhat fall'n from rever-  
ence —

Or have I dream'd the bearing of our  
knights

Tells of a manhood ever less and lower?

Or whence the fear lest this my realm,  
uprear'd,

By noble deeds at one with noble vows,  
From flat confusion and brute violences,  
Reel back into the beast, and be no  
more?'

He spoke, and taking all his younger  
knights,

Down the slope city rode, and sharply  
turn'd

North by the gate. In her high bower  
the Queen,

Working a tapestry, lifted up her head,  
Watch'd her lord pass, and knew not  
that she sigh'd.

Then ran across her memory the strange  
rhyme

Of bygone Merlin, 'Where is he who  
knows?

From the great deep to the great deep  
he goes.'

But when the morning of a tourna-  
ment,

By these in earnest those in mockery call'd  
The Tournament of the Dead Innocence,  
Brake with a wet wind blowing, Lancelot,  
Round whose sick head all night, like  
birds of prey,

The words of Arthur flying shriek'd,  
arose,

And down a streetway hung with folds of  
pure

White samite, and by fountains running  
wine,

Where children sat in white with cups of  
gold,

Moved to the lists, and there, with slow  
sad steps

Ascending, fill'd his double-dragon'd  
chair.

He glanced and saw the stately gal-  
leries,

Dame, damsel, each thro' worship of  
their Queen

White-robed in honour of the stainless  
child,

And some with scatter'd jewels, like a  
bank

Of maiden snow mingled with sparks of  
fire.

He look'd but once, and vail'd his eyes  
again.

The sudden trumpet sounded as in a  
dream

To ears but half-awaked, then one low  
roll

Of Autumn thunder, and the jousts  
began:

And ever the wind blew, and yellowing  
leaf

And gloom and gleam, and shower and  
shorn plume

Went down it. Sighing weariedly, as one  
Who sits and gazes on a faded fire,

When all the goodlier guests are past  
away,

Sat their great umpire, looking o'er the  
lists.

He saw the laws that ruled the tourna-  
ment

Broken, but spake not; once, a knight  
cast down

Before his throne of arbitration cursed  
The dead babe and the follies of the

King;

And once the laces of a helmet crack'd,  
And show'd him, like a vermin in its

hole,  
Modred, a narrow face: anon he heard  
The voice that billow'd round the barriers

roar  
An ocean-sounding welcome to one  
knight,

But newly-enter'd, taller than the rest,  
And armour'd all in forest green, whereon

There tript a hundred tiny silver deer,  
And wearing but a holly-spray for crest,

With ever-scattering berries, and on shield  
A spear, a harp, a bugle — Tristram — late

From overseas in Brittany return'd,  
And marriage with a princess of that

realm,  
Isolt the White — Sir Tristram of the

Woods —

Whom Lancelot knew, had held some-  
time with pain

His own against him, and now yearn'd  
to shake  
The burthen off his heart in one full  
shock  
With Tristram ev'n to death: his strong  
hands gript  
And dinted the gilt dragons right and left,  
Until he groan'd for wrath — so many of  
those,  
That ware their ladies' colours on the  
casque,  
Drew from before Sir Tristram to the  
bounds,  
And there with gibes and flickering  
mockeries  
Stood, while he mutter'd, 'Craven crests!  
O shame!  
What faith have these in whom they swear  
to love?  
The glory of our Round Table is no more.'

So Tristram won, and Lancelot gave,  
the gems,  
Not speaking other word than 'Hast thou  
won?  
Art thou the purest, brother? See, the  
hand  
Wherewith thou takest this, is red!' to  
whom  
Tristram, half plagued by Lancelot's  
languorous mood,  
Made answer, 'Ay, but wherefore toss  
me this  
Like a dry bone cast to some hungry  
hound?  
Let be thy fair Queen's fantasy. Strength  
of heart  
And might of limb, but mainly use and  
skill,  
Are winners in this pastime of our King.  
My hand — belike the lance hath dript  
upon it —  
No blood of mine, I trow; but O chief  
knight,  
Right arm of Arthur in the battlefield,  
Great brother, thou nor I have made the  
world;  
Be happy in thy fair Queen as I in mine.'

And Tristram round the gallery made  
his horse  
Caracole; then bow'd his homage, bluntly  
saying,

'Fair damsels, each to him who worships  
each  
Sole Queen of Beauty and of love, behold  
This day my Queen of Beauty is not here.'  
And most of these were mute, some  
anger'd, one  
Murmuring, 'All courtesy is dead,' and  
one,  
'The glory of our Round Table is no more.'

Then fell thick rain, plume droopt and  
mantle clung,  
And pettish cries awoke, and the wan day  
Went glooming down in wet and weariness:  
But under her black brows a swarthy one  
Laugh'd shrilly, crying, 'Praise the patient  
saints,  
Our one white day of Innocence hath  
past,  
Tho' somewhat draggled at the skirt. So  
be it.  
The snowdrop only, flowering thro' the  
year,  
Would make the world as blank as Winter-tide.  
Come — let us gladden their sad eyes,  
our Queen's  
And Lancelot's, at this night's solemnity  
With all the kindlier colours of the field.'

So dame and damsel glitter'd at the  
feast  
Variously gay: for he that tells the tale  
Liken'd them, saying, as when an hour  
of cold  
Falls on the mountain in midsummer  
snows,  
And all the purple slopes of mountain  
flowers  
Pass under white, till the warm hour returns  
With veer of wind, and all are flowers  
again;  
So dame and damsel cast the simple white,  
And glowing in all colours, the live grass,  
Rose-campion, bluebell, kingcup, poppy,  
glanced  
About the revels, and with mirth so loud  
Beyond all use, that, half-amazed, the  
Queen,  
And wroth at Tristram and the lawless  
jousts,

Brake up their sports, then slowly to her  
bower  
Parted, and in her bosom pain was lord.

And little Dagonet on the morrow  
morn,  
High over all the yellowing Autumn-tide,  
Danced like a wither'd leaf before the  
hall.

Then Tristram saying, 'Why skip ye so,  
Sir Fool?'

Wheel'd round on either heel, Dagonet  
replied,

'Belike for lack of wiser company;  
Or being fool, and seeing too much wit  
Makes the world rotten, why belike I skip  
To know myself the wisest knight of all.'  
'Ay, fool,' said Tristram, 'but 'tis eating  
dry

To dance without a catch, a roundelay  
To dance to.' Then he twangled on his  
harp,

And while he twangled little Dagonet  
stood

Quiet as any water-sodden log  
Stay'd in the wandering warble of a  
brook;

But when the twangling ended, skipt  
again;

And being ask'd, 'Why skipt-ye not, Sir  
Fool?'

Made answer, 'I had liefer twenty years  
Skip to the broken music of my brains  
Than any broken music thou canst make.'  
Then Tristram, waiting for the quip to  
come,

'Good now, what music have I broken,  
fool?'

And little Dagonet, skipping, 'Arthur, the  
King's;

For when thou playest that air with  
Queen Isolt,

Thou makest broken music with thy bride,  
Her daintier namesake down in Brit-  
tany —

And so thou breakest Arthur's music too.'  
'Save for that broken music in thy brains,  
Sir Fool,' said Tristram, 'I would break  
thy head.

Fool, I came late, the heathen wars were  
o'er,

The life had flown, we sware but by the  
shell —

I am but a fool to reason with a fool —  
Come, thou art crabb'd and sour: but  
lean me down,

Sir Dagonet, one of thy long ass's ears,  
And harken if my music be not true.

"Free love — free field — we love but  
while we may:

The woods are hush'd, their music is no  
more:

The leaf is dead, the yearning past away:  
New leaf, new life — the days of frost are  
o'er:

New life, new love, to suit the newer day:  
New loves are sweet as those that went  
before:

Free love — free field — we love but while  
we may."

'Ye might have moved slow-measure  
to my tune,

Not stood stockstill. I made it in the  
woods,

And heard it ring as true as tested gold.'

But Dagonet with one foot poised in  
his hand,

'Friend, did ye mark that fountain yester-  
day

Made to run wine? — but this had run  
itself

All out like a long life to a sour end —  
And them that round it sat with golden  
cups

To hand the wine to whomsoever came —  
The twelve small damosels white as In-  
nocence,

In honour of poor Innocence the babe,  
Who left the gems which Innocence the  
Queen

Lent to the King, and Innocence the King  
Gave for a prize — and one of those white  
slips

Handed her cup and piped, the pretty one,  
"Drink, drink, Sir Fool," and thereupon  
I drank,

Spat — pish — the cup was gold, the  
draught was mud.'

And Tristram, 'Was it muddier than  
thy gibes?

Is all the laughter gone dead out of  
thee? —

Not marking how the knighthood mock  
thee, fool —  
“Fear God: honour the King — his one  
true knight —  
Sole follower of the vows” — for here be  
they  
Who knew thee swine enow before I came,  
Smuttier than blasted grain: but when  
the King  
Had made thee fool, thy vanity so shot up  
It frightened all free fool from out thy  
heart;  
Which left thee less than fool, and less  
than swine,  
A naked aught — yet swine I hold thee  
still,  
For I have flung thee pearls and find thee  
swine.’

And little Dagonet mincing with his  
feet,  
‘Knight, an ye fling those rubies round  
my neck  
In lieu of hers, I’ll hold thou hast some  
touch  
Of music, since I care not for thy pearls.  
Swine? I have wallow’d, I have wash’d  
— the world  
Is flesh and shadow — I have had my day.  
The dirty nurse, Experience, in her kind  
Hath foul’d me — an I wallow’d then I  
wash’d —  
I have had my day and my philosophies —  
And thank the Lord I am King Arthur’s  
fool.  
Swine, say ye? swine, goats, asses, rams  
and geese  
Troop’d round a Paynim harper once,  
who thrumm’d  
On such a wire as musically as thou  
Some such fine song — but never a king’s  
fool.’

And Tristram, ‘Then were swine, goats,  
asses, geese  
The wiser fools, seeing thy Paynim bard  
Had such a mastery of his mystery  
That he could harp his wife up out of hell.’

Then Dagonet, turning on the ball of  
his foot,  
‘And whither harp’st thou thine? down!  
and thyself

Down! and two more: a helpful harper  
thou,  
‘That harpest downward! Dost thou know  
the star  
We call the harp of Arthur up in heaven?’

And Tristram, ‘Ay, Sir Fool, for when  
our King  
Was victor wellnigh day by day, the  
knights,  
Glorying in each new glory, set his name  
High on all hills, and in the signs of  
heaven.’

And Dagonet answer’d, ‘Ay, and when  
the land  
Was freed, and the Queen false, ye set  
yourself  
To babble about him, all to show your  
wit —  
And whether he were King by courtesy,  
Or King by right — and so went harping  
down  
The black king’s highway, got so far, and  
grew  
So witty that ye play’d at ducks and  
drakes  
With Arthur’s vows on the great lake of  
fire.  
Tuwhoo! do ye see it? do ye see the  
star?’

‘Nay, fool,’ said Tristram, ‘not in  
open day.’  
And Dagonet, ‘Nay, nor will: I see it  
and hear.  
It makes a silent music up in heaven,  
And I, and Arthur and the angels hear,  
And then we skip.’ ‘Lo, fool,’ he said,  
‘ye talk  
Fool’s treason: is the King thy brother  
fool?’  
Then little Dagonet clapt his hands and  
shrill’d,  
‘Ay, ay, my brother fool, the king of  
fools!  
Conceits himself as God that he can make  
Figs out of thistles, silk from bristles,  
milk  
From burning spurge, honey from hornet-  
combs,  
And men from beasts — Long live the  
king of fools!’

And down the city Dagonet danced  
away;

But thro' the slowly-mellowing avenues  
And solitary passes of the wood  
Rode Tristram toward Lyonesse and the  
west.

Before him fled the face of Queen Isolt  
With ruby-circled neck, but evermore  
Past, as a rustle or twitter in the wood  
Made dull his inner, keen his outer eye  
For all that walk'd, or crept, or perch'd,  
or flew.

Anon the face, as, when a gust hath  
blown,

Unruffling waters re-collect the shape  
Of one that in them sees himself, return'd;  
But at the slot or fewmets of a deer,  
Or ev'n a fall'n feather, vanish'd again.

So on for all that day from lawn to lawn  
Thro' many a league-long bower he rode.

At length

A lodge of intertjwisted beechen-boughs  
Furze-cramm'd, and bracken-rooft, the  
which himself

Built for a summer day with Queen Isolt  
Against a shower, dark in the golden  
grove

Appearing, sent his fancy back to where  
She lived a moon in that low lodge with  
him :

Till Mark her lord had past, the Cornish  
King,

With six or seven, when Tristram was  
away,

And snatch'd her thence; yet dreading  
worse than shame

Her warrior Tristram, spake not any  
word,

But bode his hour, devising wretchedness.

And now that desert lodge to Tristram  
lookt

So sweet, that halting, in he past, and  
sank

Down on a drift of foliage random-blown;  
But could not rest for musing how to  
smoothe

And sleek his marriage over to the Queen.  
Perchance in lone Tintagil far from all  
The tonguesters of the court she had not  
heard.

But then what folly had sent him overseas

After she left him lonely here? a name?  
Was it the name of one in Brittany,  
Isolt, the daughter of the King? 'Isolt  
Of the white hands' they call'd her: the  
sweet name

Allured him first, and then the maid her-  
self,

Who served him well with those white  
hands of hers,

And loved him well, until himself had  
thought

He loved her also, wedded easily,  
But left her all as easily, and return'd.

The black-blue Irish hair and Irish eyes  
Had drawn him home — what marvel?  
then he laid

His brows upon the drifted leaf and  
dream'd.

He seem'd to pace the strand of Brit-  
tany

Between Isolt of Britain and his bride,  
And show'd them both the ruby-chain,  
and both

Began to struggle for it, till his Queen  
Graspt it so hard, that all her hand was  
red.

Then cried the Breton, 'Look, her hand  
is red!

These be no rubies, this is frozen blood,  
And melts within her hand — her hand is  
hot

With ill desires, but this I gave thee, look,  
Is all as cool and white as any flower.'

Follow'd a rush of eagle's wings, and then  
A whimpering of the spirit of the child,  
Because the twain had spoil'd her car-  
canet.

He dream'd; but Arthur with a hun-  
dred spears

Rode far, till o'er the illimitable reed,  
And many a glancing plash and sallowy  
isle,

The wide-wing'd sunset of the misty marsh  
Glared on a huge machicolated tower  
That stood with open doors, whereout  
was roll'd

A roar of riot, as from men secure  
Amid their marshes, ruffians at their ease  
Among their harlot-brides, an evil song.  
'Lo there,' said one of Arthur's youth,  
for there,

High on a grim dead tree before the tower,  
 A goodly brother of the Table Round  
 Swung by the neck: and on the boughs  
 a shield  
 Showing a shower of blood in a field noir,  
 And therebeside a horn, inflamed the knights  
 At that dishonour done the gilded spur,  
 Till each would clash the shield, and blow  
 the horn.  
 But Arthur waved them back. Alone he rode.  
 Then at the dry harsh roar of the great horn,  
 That sent the face of all the marsh aloft  
 An ever upward-rushing storm and cloud  
 Of shriek and plume, the Red Knight heard, and all,  
 Even to tipmost lance and topmost helm,  
 In blood-red armour sallying, howl'd to the King,

'The teeth of Hell flay bare and gnash thee flat! —  
 Lo! art thou not that eunuch-hearted King  
 Who fain had clipt free manhood from the world —  
 The woman-worshipper? Yea, God's curse, and I!  
 Slain was the brother of my paramour  
 By a knight of thine, and I that heard her whine  
 And snivel, being eunuch-hearted too,  
 Sware by the scorpion-worm that twists in hell,  
 And stings itself to everlasting death,  
 To hang whatever knight of thine I fought  
 And tumbled. Art thou King? — Look to thy life!'

He ended: Arthur knew the voice; the face  
 Wellnigh was helmet-hidden, and the name  
 Went wandering somewhere darkling in his mind.  
 And Arthur deign'd not use of word or sword,  
 But let the drunkard, as he stretch'd from horse  
 To strike him, overbalancing his bulk,

Down from the causeway heavily to the swamp  
 Fall, as the crest of some slow-arching wave,  
 Heard in dead night along that table-shore,  
 Drops flat, and after the great waters break  
 Whitening for half a league, and thin themselves,  
 Far over sands marbled with moon and cloud,  
 From less and less to nothing; thus he fell  
 Head-heavy; then the knights, who watch'd him, roar'd  
 And shouted and leapt down upon the fall'n;  
 There trampled out his face from being known,  
 And sank his head in mire, and slimed themselves:  
 Nor heard the King for their own cries, but sprang  
 Thro' open doors, and swording right and left  
 Men, women, on their sodden faces, hurl'd  
 The tables over and the wines, and slew  
 Till all the rafters rang with woman-yells,  
 And all the pavement stream'd with massacre:  
 Then, echoing yell with yell, they fired the tower,  
 Which half that Autumn night, like the live North,  
 Red-pulsing up thro' Alioth and Alcor,  
 Made all above it, and a hundred meres  
 About it, as the water Moab saw  
 Come round by the East, and out beyond them flush'd  
 The long low dune, and lazy-plunging sea.

So all the ways were safe from shore to shore,  
 But in the heart of Arthur pain was lord.

Then, out of Tristram waking, the red dream  
 Fled with a shout, and that low lodge return'd,



Mid-forest, and the wind among the  
boughs.  
He whistled his good warhorse left to  
graze  
Among the forest greens, vaulted upon  
him,  
And rode beneath an ever-showering leaf,  
Till one lone woman, weeping near a  
cross,  
Stay'd him. 'Why weep ye?' 'Lord,'  
she said, 'my man  
Hath left me or is dead;' whereon he  
thought—  
'What, if she hate me now? I would  
not this.  
What, if she love me still? I would not  
that.  
I know not what I would'—but said to  
her,  
'Yet weep not thou, lest, if thy mate  
return,  
He find thy favour changed and love thee  
not'—  
Then pressing day by day thro' Lyo-  
nesse  
Last in a rocky hollow, belling, heard  
The hounds of Mark, and felt the goodly  
hounds  
Yelp at his heart, but turning, past and  
gain'd  
Tintagil, half in sea, and high on land,  
A crown of towers.

Down in a casement sat,  
A low sea-sunset glorying round her hair  
And glossy-throated grace, Isolt the  
Queen.  
And when she heard the feet of Tristram  
grind  
The spiring stone that scaled about her  
tower,  
Flush'd, started, met him at the doors,  
and there  
Belted his body with her white embrace,  
Crying aloud, 'Not Mark—not Mark,  
my soul!  
The footstep flutter'd me at first: not he:  
Catlike thro' his own castle steals my  
Mark,  
But warrior-wise thou stridest thro' his  
halls  
Who hates thee, as I him—ev'n to the  
death.

My soul, I felt my hatred for my Mark  
Quicken within me, and knew that thou  
wert nigh.'  
To whom Sir Tristram smiling, 'I am  
here.  
Let be thy Mark, seeing he is not thine.'

And drawing somewhat backward she  
replied,  
'Can he be wrong'd who is not ev'n his  
own,  
But save for dread of thee had beaten  
me,  
Scratch'd, bitten, blinded, marr'd me  
somehow—Mark?  
What rights are his that dare not strike  
for them?  
Not lift a hand—not, tho' he found me  
thus!  
But harken! have ye met him? hence he  
went  
To-day for three days' hunting—as he  
said—  
And so returns belike within an hour.  
Mark's way, my soul!—but eat not  
thou with Mark,  
Because he hates thee even more than  
fears;  
Nor drink: and when thou passest any  
wood  
Close vizer, lest an arrow from the bush  
Should leave me all alone with Mark and  
hell.  
My God, the measure of my hate for  
Mark  
Is as the measure of my love for thee.'

So, pluck'd one way by hate and one  
by love,  
Drain'd of her force, again she sat, and  
spake  
To Tristram, as he knelt before her,  
saying,  
'O hunter, and O blower of the horn,  
Harper, and thou hast been a rover too,  
For, ere I mated with my shambling king,  
Ye twain had fallen out about the bride  
Of one—his name is out of me—the  
prize,  
If prize she were—(what marvel—she  
could see)—  
Thine, friend; and ever since my craven  
seeks

To wreck thee villainously: but, O Sir Knight,  
What dame or damsel have ye kneel'd to last?'

And Tristram, 'Last to my Queen  
Paramount,  
Here now to my Queen Paramount of  
love  
And loveliness — ay, lovelier than when  
first  
Her light feet fell on our rough Lyo-  
nesse,  
Sailing from Ireland.'

Softly laugh'd Isolt;  
'Flatter me not, for hath not our great  
Queen  
My dole of beauty trebled?' and he said,  
'Her beauty is her beauty, and thine  
thine,  
And thine is more to me — soft, gracious,  
kind —  
Save when thy Mark is kindled on thy  
lips  
Most gracious; but she, haughty, ev'n to  
him,  
Lancelot; for I have seen him wan enow  
To make one doubt if ever the great  
Queen  
Have yielded him her love.'

To whom Isolt,  
'Ah then, false hunter and false harper,  
thou  
Who brakest thro' the scruple of my  
bond,  
Calling me thy white hind, and saying  
to me  
That Guinevere had sinn'd against the  
highest,  
And I — misyoked with such a want of  
man —  
That I could hardly sin against the lowest.'

He answer'd, 'O my soul, be com-  
forted!  
If this be sweet, to sin in leading-strings,  
If here be comfort, and if ours be sin,  
Crown'd warrant had we for the crown-  
ing sin  
That made us happy: but how ye greet  
me — fear

And fault and doubt — no word of that  
fond tale —  
Thy deep heart-yearnings, thy sweet  
memories  
Of Tristram in that year he was away.'

And, saddening on the sudden, spake  
Isolt,  
'I had forgotten all in my strong joy  
To see thee — yearnings? — ay! for, hour  
by hour,  
Here in the never-ended afternoon,  
O sweeter than all memories of thee,  
Deeper than any yearnings after thee  
Seem'd those far-rolling, westward-  
smiling seas,  
Watch'd from this tower. Isolt of Britain  
dash'd  
Before Isolt of Brittany on the strand,  
Would that have chill'd her bride-kiss?  
Wedded her?  
Fought in her father's battles? wounded  
there?  
The King was all fulfill'd with grateful-  
ness,  
And she, my namesake of the hands, that  
heal'd  
Thy hurt and heart with unguent and  
caress —  
Well — can I wish her any huger wrong  
Than having known thee? her too hast  
thou left  
To pine and waste in those sweet  
memories.  
O were I not my Mark's, by whom all  
men  
Are noble, I should hate thee more than  
love.'

And Tristram, fondling her light hands,  
replied,  
'Grace, Queen, for being loved: she  
loved me well.  
Did I love her? the name at least I  
loved.  
Isolt? — I fought his battles, for Isolt!  
The night was dark; the true star set.  
Isolt!  
The name was ruler of the dark — Isolt?  
Care not for her! patient, and prayerful,  
meek,  
Pale-blooded, she will yield herself to  
God.'

And Isolt answer'd, 'Yea, and why  
not I?  
Mine is the larger need, who am not meek,  
Pale-blooded, prayerful. Let me tell  
thee now.  
Here one black, mute midsummer night  
I sat,  
Lonely, but musing on thee, wondering  
where,  
Murmuring a light song I had heard thee  
sing,  
And once or twice I spake thy name aloud.  
Then flash'd a levin-brand; and near me  
stood,  
In fuming sulphur blue and green, a  
fiend —  
Mark's way to steal behind one in the  
dark —  
For there was Mark: "He has wedded  
her," he said,  
Not said, but hiss'd it: then this crown  
of towers  
So shook to such a roar of all the sky,  
That here in utter dark I swoon'd away,  
And woke again in utter dark, and cried,  
"I will flee hence and give myself to  
God" —  
And thou wert lying in thy new leman's  
arms.'

Then Tristram, ever dallying with her  
hand,  
'May God be with thee, sweet, when old  
and gray,  
And past desire!' a saying that anger'd  
her.  
"May God be with thee, sweet, when  
thou art old,  
And sweet no more to me!" I need  
Him now.  
For when had Lancelot utter'd aught so  
gross  
Ev'n to the swineherd's malkin in the  
mast?  
The greater man, the greater courtesy.  
Far other was the Tristram, Arthur's  
knight!  
But thou, thro' ever harrying thy wild  
beasts —  
Save that to touch a harp, tilt with a  
lance  
Becomes thee well — art grown wild beast  
thyself.

How darest thou, if lover, push me  
even  
In fancy from thy side, and set me far  
In the gray distance, half a life away,  
Her to be loved no more? Unsay it,  
unswear!  
Flatter me rather, seeing me so weak,  
Broken with Mark and hate and solitude,  
Thy marriage and mine own, that I  
should suck  
Lies like sweet wines: lie to me: I be-  
lieve.  
Will ye not lie? not swear, as there ye  
kneel,  
And solemnly as when ye swear to him,  
The man of men, our King — My God,  
the power  
Was once in vows when men believed the  
King!  
They lied not then, who swear, and thro'  
their vows  
The King prevailing made his realm: —  
I say,  
Swear to me thou wilt love me ev'n when  
old,  
Gray-hair'd, and past desire, and in de-  
spair.'

Then Tristram, pacing moodily up and  
down,  
'Vows! did you keep the vow you made  
to Mark  
More than I mine? Lied, say ye? Nay,  
but learnt,  
The vow that binds too strictly snaps  
itself —  
My knighthood taught me this — ay, being  
snapt —  
We run more counter to the soul thereof  
Than had we never sworn. I swear no  
more.  
I swore to the great King, and am for-  
sworn.  
For once — ev'n to the height — I  
honour'd him.  
"Man, is he man at all?" methought,  
when first  
I rode from our rough Lyonesse, and  
beheld  
That victor of the Pagan throned in hall —  
His hair, a sun that ray'd from off a brow  
Like hillsnow high in heaven, the steel-  
blue eyes,

The golden beard that clothed his lips  
with light —  
Moreover, that weird legend of his birth,  
With Merlin's mystic babble about his end  
Amazed me; then his foot was on a stool  
Shaped as a dragon; he seem'd to me no  
man,  
But Michaël trampling Satan; so I swear,  
Being amazed: but this went by — The  
vows!  
O ay — the wholesome madness of an  
hour —  
They served their use, their time; for  
every knight  
Believed himself a greater than himself,  
And every follower eyed him as a God;  
Till he, being lifted up beyond himself,  
Did mightier deeds than otherwise he had  
done,  
And so the realm was made; but then  
their vows —  
First mainly thro' that sullyng of our  
Queen —  
Began to gall the knighthood, asking  
whence  
Had Arthur right to bind them to himself?  
Dropt down from heaven? wash'd up  
from out the deep?  
They fail'd to trace him thro' the flesh  
and blood  
Of our old kings: whence then? a doubt-  
ful lord  
To bind them by inviolable vows,  
Which flesh and blood perforce would  
violate:  
For feel this arm of mine — the tide  
within  
Red with free chase and heather-scented  
air,  
Pulsing full man; can Arthur make me  
pure  
As any maiden child? lock up my tongue  
From uttering freely what I freely hear?  
Bind me to one? The wide world  
laughs at it.  
And worldling of the world am I, and  
know  
The ptarmigan that whitens ere his hour  
Woos his own end; we are not angels  
here  
Nor shall be: vows — I am woodman of  
the woods,  
And hear the garnet-headed yaffingale

Mock them: my soul, we love but while  
we may;  
And therefore is my love so large for thee,  
Seeing it is not bounded save by love.'

Here ending, he moved toward her,  
and she said,  
'Good: an I turn'd away my love for  
thee  
To some one thrice as courteous as thy-  
self —  
For courtesy wins woman all as well  
As valour may, but he that closes both  
Is perfect, he is Lancelot — taller indeed,  
Rosier and comelier, thou — but say I  
loved  
This knightliest of all knights, and cast  
thee back  
Thine own small saw, "We love but  
while we may,"  
Well then, what answer?'

He that while she spake,  
Mindful of what he brought to adorn her  
with,  
The jewels, had let one finger lightly  
touch  
The warm white apple of her throat,  
replied,  
'Press this a little closer, sweet, until —  
Come, I am hunger'd and half-anger'd —  
meat,  
Wine, wine — and I will love thee to the  
death,  
And out beyond into the dream to come.'

So then, when both were brought to  
full accord,  
She rose, and set before him all he will'd;  
And after these had comforted the blood  
With meats and wines, and satiated their  
hearts —  
Now talking of their woodland paradise,  
The deer, the dews, the fern, the founts,  
the lawns;  
Now mocking at the much ungainliness,  
And craven shifts, and long crane legs of  
Mark —  
Then Tristram laughing caught the harp,  
and sang:

'Ay, ay, O ay — the winds that bend  
the brier!

A star in heaven, a star within the mere!  
Ay, ay, O ay — a star was my desire,  
And one was far apart, and one was  
near:

Ay, ay, O ay — the winds that bow the  
grass!

And one was water and one star was fire,  
And one will ever shine and one will  
pass.

Ay, ay, O ay — the winds that move the  
mere.'

Then in the light's last glimmer Tris-  
tram show'd

And swung the ruby carcanet. She  
cried,

'The collar of some Order, which our  
King

Hath newly founded, all for thee, my  
soul,

For thee, to yield thee grace beyond thy  
peers.'

'Not so, my Queen,' he said, 'but the  
red fruit

Grown on a magic oak-tree in mid-  
heaven,

And won by Tristram as a tourney-prize,  
And hither brought by Tristram for his  
last

Love-offering and peace-offering unto  
thee.'

He spoke, he turn'd, then, flinging  
round her neck,

Claspt it, and cried 'Thine Order, O my  
Queen!'

But, while he bow'd to kiss the jewell'd  
throat,

Out of the dark, just as the lips had  
touch'd,

Behind him rose a shadow and a shriek —  
'Mark's way,' said Mark, and clove him  
thro' the brain.

That night came Arthur home, and  
while he climb'd,

All in a death-dumb autumn-dripping  
gloom,

The stairway to the hall, and look'd and  
saw

The great Queen's bower was dark, —  
about his feet

A voice clung sobbing till he question'd it,  
'What art thou?' and the voice about  
his feet

Sent up an answer, sobbing, 'I am thy  
fool,

And I shall never make thee smile again.'

### GUINEVERE.

QUEEN GUINEVERE had fled the court,  
and sat

There in the holy house at Almesbury  
Weeping, none with her save a little  
maid,

A novice: one low light betwixt them  
burn'd

Blur'd by the creeping mist, for all  
abroad,

Beneath a moon unseen albeit at full,  
The white mist, like a face-cloth to the  
face,

Clung to the dead earth, and the land  
was still.

For hither had she fled, her cause of  
flight

Sir Modred; he that like a subtle beast  
Lay couchant with his eyes upon the  
throne,

Ready to spring, waiting a chance: for  
this

He chill'd the popular praises of the  
King

With silent smiles of slow disparage-  
ment;

And tamper'd with the Lords of the  
White Horse,

Heathen, the brood by Hengist left; and  
sought

To make disruption in the Table Round  
Of Arthur, and to splinter it into feuds  
Serving his traitorous end; and all his  
aims

Were sharpen'd by strong hate for Lance-  
lot.

For thus it chanced one morn when  
all the court,

Green-suited, but with plumes that  
mock'd the may,

Had been, their wont, a-maying and  
return'd,

That Modred still in green, all ear and eye,

Climb'd to the high top of the garden-wall  
 To spy some secret scandal if he might,  
 And saw the Queen who sat betwixt her best  
 Enid, and lissome Vivien, of her court  
 The wiliest and the worst; and more than this  
 He saw not, for Sir Lancelot passing by  
 Spied where he couch'd, and as the gardener's hand  
 Picks from the colewort a green caterpillar,  
 So from the high wall and the flowering grove  
 Of grasses Lancelot pluck'd him by the heel,  
 And cast him as a worm upon the way;  
 But when he knew the Prince tho' marr'd with dust,  
 He, reverencing king's blood in a bad man,  
 Made such excuses as he might, and these  
 Full knightly without scorn; for in those days  
 No knight of Arthur's noblest dealt in scorn;  
 But, if a man were halt or hunch'd, in him  
 By those whom God had made full-limb'd and tall,  
 Scorn was allow'd as part of his defect,  
 And he was answer'd softly by the King  
 And all his Table. So Sir Lancelot holp  
 To raise the Prince, who rising twice or thrice  
 Full sharply smote his knees, and smiled,  
 and went:  
 But, ever after, the small violence done  
 Rankled in him and ruffled all his heart,  
 As the sharp wind that ruffles all day long  
 A little bitter pool about a stone  
 On the bare coast.

But when Sir Lancelot told  
 This matter to the Queen, at first she laugh'd  
 Lightly, to think of Modred's dusty fall,  
 Then shudder'd, as the village wife who cries  
 'I shudder, some one steps across my grave;'

Then laugh'd again, but faintlier, for indeed  
 She half-foresaw that he, the subtle beast,  
 Would track her guilt until he found, and hers  
 Would be for evermore a name of scorn.  
 Henceforward rarely could she front in hall,  
 Or elsewhere, Modred's narrow foxy face,  
 Heart-hiding smile, and gray persistent eye:  
 Henceforward too, the Powers that tend the soul,  
 To help it from the death that cannot die,  
 And save it even in extremes, began  
 To vex and plague her. Many a time for hours,  
 Beside the placid breathings of the King,  
 In the dead night, grim faces came and went  
 Before her, or a vague spiritual fear —  
 Like to some doubtful noise of creaking doors,  
 Heard by the watcher in a haunted house,  
 That keeps the rust of murder on the walls —  
 Held her awake: or if she slept, she dream'd  
 An awful dream; for then she seem'd to stand  
 On some vast plain before a setting sun,  
 And from the sun there swiftly made at her  
 A ghastly something, and its shadow flew  
 Before it, till it touch'd her, and she turn'd —  
 When lo! her own, that broadening from her feet,  
 And blackening, swallow'd all the land,  
 and in it  
 Far cities burnt, and with a cry she woke.  
 And all this trouble did not pass but grew;  
 Till ev'n the clear face of the guileless King,  
 And trustful courtesies of household life,  
 Became her bane; and at the last she said,  
 'O Lancelot, get thee hence to thine own land,  
 For if thou tarry we shall meet again,  
 And if we meet again, some evil chance  
 Will make the smouldering scandal break  
 and blaze



Before the people, and our lord the King,  
 And Lancelot ever promised, but remain'd,  
 And still they met and met. Again she said,  
 'O Lancelot, if thou love me get thee hence.'  
 And then they were agreed upon a night  
 (When the good King should not be there) to meet  
 And part for ever. Vivien, lurking, heard.  
 She told Sir Modred. Passion-pale they met  
 And greeted. Hands in hands, and eye to eye.  
 Low on the border of her couch they sat  
 Stammering and staring. It was their last hour,  
 A madness of farewells. And Modred brought  
 His creatures to the basement of the tower  
 For testimony; and crying with full voice  
 'Traitor, come out, ye are trapt at last,'  
 aroused  
 Lancelot, who rushing outward lionlike  
 Leapt on him, and hurl'd him headlong,  
 and he fell  
 Stunn'd, and his creatures took and bare him off,  
 And all was still: then she, 'The end is come,  
 And I am shamed for ever;' and he said,  
 'Mine be the shame; mine was the sin: but rise,  
 And fly to my strong castle overseas:  
 There will I hide thee, till my life shall end,  
 There hold thee with my life against the world.'  
 She answer'd, 'Lancelot, wilt thou hold me so?  
 Nay, friend, for we have taken our farewells.  
 Would God that thou couldst hide me from myself!  
 Mine is the shame, for I was wife, and thou  
 Unwedded: yet rise now, and let us fly,  
 For I will draw me into sanctuary,  
 And bide my doom.' So Lancelot got her horse,  
 Set her thereon, and mounted on his own,  
 And then they rode to the divided way,  
 There kiss'd, and parted weeping: for he past,

Love-loyal to the least wish of the Queen,  
 Back to his land; but she to Almesbury  
 Flew all night long by glimmering waste  
 and weald,  
 And heard the Spirits of the waste and weald  
 Moan as she fled, or thought she heard them moan:  
 And in herself she moan'd, 'Too late, too late!'  
 Till in the cold wind that foreruns the morn,  
 A blot in heaven, the Raven, flying high,  
 Croak'd, and she thought, 'He spies a field of death;  
 For now the Heathen of the Northern Sea,  
 Lured by the crimes and frailties of the court,  
 Begin to slay the folk, and spoil the land.'

And when she came to Almesbury she spake  
 There to the nuns, and said, 'Mine enemies  
 Pursue me, but, O peaceful Sisterhood,  
 Receive, and yield me sanctuary, nor ask  
 Her name to whom ye yield it, till her time  
 To tell you:' and her beauty, grace and power,  
 Wrought as a charm upon them, and they spared  
 To ask it.

So the stately Queen abode  
 For many a week, unknown, among the nuns;  
 Nor with them mix'd, nor told her name, nor sought,  
 Wrapt in her grief, for housel or for shrift,  
 But communed only with the little maid,  
 Who pleased her with a babbling heedlessness  
 Which often lured her from herself; but now,  
 This night, a rumour wildly blown about  
 Came, that Sir Modred had usurp'd the realm,  
 And leagued him with the heathen, while the King  
 Was waging war on Lancelot: then she thought,

'With what a hate the people and the King  
Must hate me,' and bow'd down upon  
her hands  
Silent, until the little maid, who brook'd  
No silence, brake it, uttering, 'Late! so  
late!  
What hour, I wonder, now?' and when  
she drew  
No answer, by and by began to hum  
An air the nuns had taught her, 'Late,  
so late!'  
Which when she heard, the Queen look'd  
up, and said,  
'O maiden, if indeed ye list to sing,  
Sing, and unbind my heart that I may  
weep.'  
Whereat full willingly sang the little  
maid.

'Late, late, so late! and dark the  
night and chill!  
Late, late, so late! but we can enter still.  
Too late, too late! ye cannot enter now.

'No light had we: for that we do  
repent;  
And learning this, the bridegroom will  
relent.  
Too late, too late! ye cannot enter now.

'No light: so late! and dark and chill  
the night!  
O let us in, that we may find the light!  
Too late, too late: ye cannot enter now.

'Have we not heard the bridegroom is  
so sweet?  
O let us in, tho' late, to kiss his feet!  
No, no, too late! ye cannot enter now.'

So sang the novice, while full passion-  
ately,  
Her head upon her hands, remembering  
Her thought when first she came, wept  
the sad Queen.  
Then said the little novice prattling to  
her,

'O pray you, noble lady, weep no  
more;  
But let my words, the words of one so  
small,

Who knowing nothing knows but to  
obey,  
And if I do not there is penance given—  
Comfort your sorrows; for they do not  
flow  
From evil done; right sure am I of  
that,  
Who see your tender grace and stateli-  
ness.  
But weigh your sorrows with our lord the  
King's,  
And weighing find them less; for gone is  
he  
To wage grim war against Sir Lancelot  
there,  
Round that strong castle where he holds  
the Queen;  
And Modred whom he left in charge of  
all,  
The traitor — Ah sweet lady, the King's  
grief  
For his own self, and his own Queen, and  
realm,  
Must needs be thrice as great as any of  
ours.  
For me, I thank the saints, I am not  
great.  
For if there ever come a grief to me  
I cry my cry in silence, and have done.  
None knows it, and my tears have brought  
me good:  
But even were the griefs of little ones  
As great as those of great ones, yet this  
grief  
Is added to the griefs the great must  
bear,  
That howsoever much they may desire  
Silence, they cannot weep behind a  
cloud:  
As even here they talk at Almesbury  
About the good King and his wicked  
Queen,  
And were I such a King with such a  
Queen,  
Well might I wish to veil her wicked-  
ness,  
But were I such a King, it could not be.'

Then to her own sad heart mutter'd the  
Queen,  
'Will the child kill me with her innocent  
talk?'  
But openly she answer'd, 'Must not I,

If this false traitor have displaced his lord,  
Grieve with the common grief of all the realm?’

‘Yea,’ said the maid, ‘this is all woman’s grief,  
That *she* is woman, whose disloyal life  
Hath wrought confusion in the Table Round  
Which good King Arthur founded, years ago,  
With signs and miracles and wonders, there  
At Camelot, ere the coming of the Queen.’

Then thought the Queen within herself again,  
‘Will the child kill me with her foolish prate?’  
But openly she spake and said to her,  
‘O little maid, shut in by nunnery walls,  
What canst thou know of Kings and Tables Round,  
Or what of signs and wonders, but the signs  
And simple miracles of thy nunnery?’

To whom the little novice garrulously,  
‘Yea, but I know: the land was full of signs  
And wonders ere the coming of the Queen.  
So said my father, and himself was knight  
Of the great Table — at the founding of it;  
And rode thereto from Lyonesse, and he said

That as he rode, an hour or maybe twain  
After the sunset, down the coast, he heard  
Strange music, and he paused, and turning — there,

All down the lonely coast of Lyonesse,  
Each with a beacon-star upon his head,  
And with a wild sea-light about his feet,  
He saw them — headland after headland  
flame

Far on into the rich heart of the west:  
And in the light the white mermaid  
swam,  
And strong man-breasted things stood  
from the sea,  
And sent a deep sea-voice thro’ all the  
land,

To which the little elves of chasm and cleft

Made answer, sounding like a distant horn.

So said my father — yea, and further-  
more,

Next morning, while he passed the dim-  
lit woods,

Himself beheld three spirits mad with joy  
Come dashing down on a tall wayside  
flower,

That shook beneath them, as the thistle  
shakes

When three gray linnets wrangle for the  
seed:

And still at evenings on before his horse  
The flickering fairy-circle wheel’d and  
broke

Flying, and link’d again, and wheel’d and  
broke

Flying, for all the land was full of life.

And when at last he came to Camelot,  
A wreath of airy dancers hand-in-hand  
Swung round the lighted lantern of the  
hall;

And in the hall itself was such a feast  
As never man had dream’d; for every  
knight

Had whatsoever meat he long’d for served  
By hands unseen; and even as he said  
Down in the cellars merry bloated things  
Shoulder’d the spigot, straddling on the  
butts

While the wine ran: so glad were spirits  
and men

Before the coming of the sinful Queen.’

Then spake the Queen and somewhat  
bitterly,

‘Were they so glad? ill prophets were  
they all,

Spirits and men: could none of them  
foresee,

Not even thy wise father with his signs  
And wonders, what has fall’n upon the  
realm?’

To whom the novice garrulously again,  
‘Yea, one, a bard; of whom my father  
said,

Full many a noble war-song had he sung,  
Ev’n in the presence of an enemy’s  
fleet,

Between the steep cliff and the coming  
 wave;  
 And many a mystic lay of life and death  
 Had chanted on the smoky mountain-  
 tops,  
 When round him bent the spirits of the  
 hills  
 With all their dewy hair blown back like  
 flame:  
 So said my father — and that night the  
 bard  
 Sang Arthur's glorious wars, and sang  
 the King  
 As wellnigh more than man, and rail'd  
 at those  
 Who call'd him the false son of Gorlots:  
 For there was no man knew from whence  
 he came;  
 But after tempest, when the long wave  
 broke  
 All down the thundering shores of Bude  
 and Bos,  
 There came a day as still as heaven, and  
 then  
 They found a naked child upon the sands  
 Of dark Tintagil by the Cornish sea;  
 And that was Arthur; and they foster'd  
 him  
 Till he by miracle was approven King:  
 And that his grave should be a mystery  
 From all men, like his birth; and could  
 he find  
 A woman in her womanhood as great  
 As he was in his manhood, then, he  
 sang,  
 The twain together well might change  
 the world.  
 But even in the middle of his song  
 He falter'd, and his hand fell from the  
 harp,  
 And pale he turn'd, and reel'd, and would  
 have fall'n,  
 But that they stay'd him up; nor would  
 he tell  
 His vision; but what doubt that he fore-  
 saw  
 This evil work of Lancelot and the  
 Queen?'

Then thought the Queen, 'Lo! they  
 have set her on,  
 Our simple-seeming Abbess and her  
 nuns,

To play upon me,' and bow'd her head  
 nor spake.

Whereat the novice crying, with clasp'd  
 hands,

Shame on her own garrulity garrulously,  
 Said the good nuns would check her  
 gadding tongue

Full often, 'and, sweet lady, if I seem  
 To vex an ear too sad to listen to me,  
 Unmannerly, with prattling and the tales  
 Which my good father told me, check  
 me too

Nor let me shame my father's memory,  
 one

Of noblest manners, tho' himself would  
 say

Sir Lancelot had the noblest; and he  
 died,

Kill'd in a tilt, come next, five summers  
 back,

And left me; but of others who remain,  
 And of the two first-famed for courtesy —  
 And pray you check me if I ask amiss —  
 But pray you, which had noblest, while  
 you moved

Among them, Lancelot or our lord the  
 King?'

Then the pale Queen look'd up and  
 answer'd her,

'Sir Lancelot, as became a noble knight,  
 Was gracious to all ladies, and the same  
 In open battle or the tilting-field  
 Forbore his own advantage, and the King  
 In open battle or the tilting-field  
 Forbore his own advantage, and these  
 two

Were the most nobly-manner'd men of  
 all;

For manners are not idle, but the fruit  
 Of loyal nature, and of noble mind.'

'Ye, said the maid, 'be manners such  
 fair fruit?

Then Lancelot's needs must be a thou-  
 sand-fold

Less noble, being, as all rumour runs,  
 The most disloyal friend in all the world.'

To which a mournful answer made the  
 Queen:

'O closed about by narrowing nunnery-  
 walls,

What knowest thou of the world, and all  
its lights  
And shadows, all the wealth and all the  
woe?

If ever Lancelot, that most noble knight,  
Were for one hour less noble than him-  
self,

Pray for him that he scape the doom of  
fire,  
And weep for her who drew him to his  
doom.'

'Yea,' said the little novice, 'I pray for  
both;

But I should all as soon believe that his,  
Sir Lancelot's, were as noble as the  
King's,

As I could think, sweet lady, yours  
would be

Such as they are, were you the sinful  
Queen.'

So she, like many another babbler, hurt  
Whom she would soothe, and harm'd  
where she would heal;

For here a sudden flush of wrathful heat  
Fired all the pale face of the Queen, who  
cried,

'Such as thou art be never maiden more  
For ever! thou their tool, set on to plague  
And play upon, and harry me, petty spy  
And traitress.' When that storm of anger  
brake

From Guinevere, aghast the maiden rose,  
White as her veil, and stood before the  
Queen

As tremulously as foam upon the beach  
Stands in a wind, ready to break and fly,  
And when the Queen had added 'Get  
thee hence,'

Fled frightened. Then that other left alone  
Sigh'd, and began to gather heart again,  
Saying in herself, 'The simple, fearful  
child

Meant nothing, but my own too-fearful  
guilt,

Simpler than any child, betrays itself.  
But help me, heaven, for surely I repent.  
For what is true repentance but in  
thought—

Not ev'n in inmost thought to think again  
The sins that made the past so pleasant  
to us:

And I have sworn never to see him more,  
To see him more.'

And ev'n in saying this,  
Her memory from old habit of the mind  
Went slipping back upon the golden  
days

In which she saw him first, when Lance-  
lot came,  
Reputed the best knight and goodliest  
man,

Ambassador, to lead her to his lord  
Arthur, and led her forth, and far ahead  
Of his and her retinue moving, they,  
Rapt in sweet talk or lively, all on love  
And sport and tilts and pleasure, (for the  
time

Was maytime, and as yet no sin was  
dream'd,)

Rode under groves that look'd a paradise  
Of blossom, over sheets of hyacinth  
That seem'd the heavens upbreking thro'  
the earth,

And on from hill to hill, and every day  
Beheld at noon in some delicious dale  
The silk pavilions of King Arthur raised  
For brief repast or afternoon repose  
By couriers gone before; and on again,  
Till yet once more ere set of sun they  
saw

The Dragon of the great Pendragonship,  
That crown'd the state pavilion of the  
King,

Blaze by the rushing brook or silent well.

But when the Queen immersed in such  
a trance,  
And moving thro' the past unconsciously,  
Came to that point where first she saw  
the King

Ride toward her from the city, sigh'd to  
find

Her journey done, glanced at him, thought  
him cold,

High, self-contain'd, and passionless, not  
like him,

'Not like my Lancelot'—while she  
brooded thus

And grew half-guilty in her thoughts  
again,

There rode an armed warrior to the doors.  
A murmuring whisper thro' the nunnery  
ran,

Then on a sudden a cry, 'The King.'  
 She sat  
 Stiff-stricken, listening; but when armed  
 feet  
 Thro' the long gallery from the outer  
 doors  
 Rang coming, prone from off her seat  
 she fell,  
 And grovell'd with her face against the  
 floor:  
 There with her milkwhite arms and  
 shadowy hair  
 She made her face a darkness from the  
 King:  
 And in the darkness heard his armed  
 feet  
 Pause by her; then came silence, then a  
 voice,  
 Monotonous and hollow like a Ghost's  
 Denouncing judgment, but tho' changed,  
 the King's:

'Liest thou here so low, the child of  
 one  
 I honour'd, happy, dead before thy  
 shame?  
 Well is it that no child is born of thee.  
 The children born of thee are sword and  
 fire,  
 Red ruin, and the breaking up of laws,  
 The craft of kindred and the Godless  
 hosts  
 Of heathen swarming o'er the Northern  
 Sea;  
 Whom I, while yet Sir Lancelot, my right  
 arm,  
 The mightiest of my knights, abode with  
 me,  
 Have everywhere about this land of  
 Christ  
 In twelve great battles ruining over-  
 thrown.  
 And knowest thou now from whence I  
 come — from him,  
 From waging bitter war with him: and  
 he,  
 That did not shun to smite me in worse  
 way,  
 Had yet that grace of courtesy in him left,  
 He spared to lift his hand against the King  
 Who made him knight: but many a  
 knight was slain;  
 And many more, and all his kith and kin

Clave to him, and abode in his own land.  
 And many more when Modred raised  
 revolt,  
 Forgetful of their troth and fealty, clave  
 To Modred, and a remnant stays with me.  
 And of this remnant will I leave a part,  
 True men who love me still, for whom I  
 live,  
 To guard thee in the wild hour coming on,  
 Lest but a hair of this low head be harm'd.  
 Fear not: thou shalt be guarded till my  
 death.  
 Howbeit I know, if ancient prophecies  
 Have err'd not, that I march to meet my  
 doom.  
 Thou hast not made my life so sweet to  
 me,  
 That I the King should greatly care to  
 live;  
 For thou hast spoilt the purpose of my life.  
 Bear with me for the last time while I  
 show,  
 Ev'n for thy sake, the sin which thou hast  
 sinn'd.  
 For when the Roman left us, and their law  
 Relax'd its hold upon us, and the ways  
 Were fill'd with rapine, here and there a  
 deed  
 Of prowess done redress'd a random  
 wrong.  
 But I was first of all the kings who drew  
 The Knighthood-errant of this realm and  
 all  
 The realms together under me, their  
 Head,  
 In that fair Order of my Table Round,  
 A glorious company, the flower of men,  
 To serve as model for the mighty world,  
 And be the fair beginning of a time.  
 I made them lay their hands in mine and  
 swear  
 To reverence the King, as if he were  
 Their conscience, and their conscience as  
 their King,  
 To break the heathen and uphold the  
 Christ,  
 To ride abroad redressing human wrongs,  
 To speak no slander, no, nor listen to it,  
 To honour his own word as if his God's,  
 To lead sweet lives in purest chastity,  
 To love one maiden only, cleave to her,  
 And worship her by years of noble deeds,  
 Until they won her; for indeed I knew



Of no more subtle master under heaven  
Than is the maiden passion for a maid,  
Not only to keep down the base in man,  
But teach high thought, and amiable  
words

And courtliness, and the desire of fame,  
And love of truth, and all that makes a  
man.

And all this throve before I wedded thee,  
Believing, "lo mine helpmate, one to feel  
My purpose and rejoicing in my joy."  
Then came thy shameful sin with Lance-  
lot;

Then came the sin of Tristram and Isolt;  
Then others, following these my mightiest  
knights,

And drawing foul ensample from fair  
names,

Sinn'd also, till the loathsome opposite  
Of all my heart had destined did obtain,  
And all thro' thee! so that this life of mine  
I guard as God's high gift from scathe  
and wrong,

Not greatly care to lose; but rather think  
How sad it were for Arthur, should he live,  
To sit once more within his lonely hall,  
And miss the wonted number of my  
knights,

And miss to hear high talk of noble deeds  
As in the golden days before thy sin.

For which of us, who might be left, could  
speak

Of the pure heart, nor seem to glance at  
thee?

And in thy bowers of Camelot or of Usk  
Thy shadow still would glide from room  
to room,

And I should evermore be vext with thee  
In hanging robe or vacant ornament,  
Or ghostly footfall echoing on the stair.

For think not, tho' thou wouldst not love  
thy lord,

Thy lord has wholly lost his love for thee.  
I am not made of so slight elements.

Yet must I leave thee, woman, to thy  
shame.

I hold that man the worst of public foes  
Who either for his own or children's sake,  
To save his blood from scandal, lets the  
wife

Whom he knows false, abide and rule the  
house:

For being thro' his cowardice allow'd

Her station, taken everywhere for pure,  
She like a new disease, unknown to men,  
Creeps, no precaution used, among the  
crowd,

Makes wicked lightnings of her eyes, and  
saps

The fealty of our friends, and stirs the  
pulse

With devil's leaps, and poisons half the  
young.

Worst of the worst were that man he that  
reigns!

Better the King's waste hearth and aching  
heart

Than thou reseated in thy place of light,  
The mockery of my people, and their  
bane.'

He paused, and in the pause she crept  
an inch

Nearer, and laid her hands about his feet.  
Far off a solitary trumpet blew.

Then waiting by the doors the warhorse  
neigh'd

As at a friend's voice, and he spake again:

'Yet think not that I come to urge thy  
crimes,

I did not come to curse thee, Guinevere,  
I, whose vast pity almost makes me die  
To see thee, laying there thy golden head,  
My pride in happier summers, at my feet.

The wrath which forced my thoughts on  
that fierce law,

The doom of treason and the flaming  
death

(When first I learnt thee hidden here), is  
past.

The pang — which while I weigh'd thy  
heart with one

Too wholly true to dream untruth in thee,  
Made my tears burn — is also past — in

part.

And all is past, the sin is sinn'd and I,  
Lo! I forgive thee, as Eternal God

Forgives: do thou for thine own soul the  
rest.

But how to take last leave of all I loved?  
O golden hair, with which I used to play  
Not knowing! O imperial-moulded form,

And beauty such as never woman wore,  
Until it came a kingdom's curse with  
thee —

I cannot touch thy lips, they are not mine,  
But Lancelot's: nay, they never were the  
King's.

I cannot take thy hand; that too is flesh,  
And in the flesh thou hast sinn'd; and  
mine own flesh,

Here looking down on thine polluted, cries  
"I loathe thee:" yet not less, O Guinevere,  
For I was ever virgin save for thee,  
My love thro' flesh hath wrought into my  
life

So far, that my doom is, I love thee still.  
Let no man dream but that I love thee still.  
Perchance, and so thou purify thy soul,  
And so thou lean on our fair father Christ,  
Hereafter in that world where all are pure  
We two may meet before high God, and  
thou

Wilt spring to me, and claim me thine,  
and know

I am thine husband — not a smaller soul,  
Nor Lancelot, nor another. Leave me  
that,

I charge thee, my last hope. Now must  
I hence.

Thro' the thick night I hear the trumpet  
blow:

They summon me their King to lead mine  
hosts

Far down to that great battle in the west,  
Where I must strike against the man they  
call

My sister's son — no kin of mine, who  
leagues

With Lords of the White Horse, heathen,  
and knights,

Traitors — and strike him dead, and meet  
myself

Death, or I know not what mysterious  
doom.

And thou remaining here wilt learn the  
event;

But hither shall I never come again,  
Never lie by thy side; see thee no  
more —

Farewell!

And while she grovell'd at his feet,  
She felt the King's breath wander o'er  
her neck,  
And in the darkness o'er her fallen head,  
Perceived the waving of his hands that  
blest.

Then, listening till those armed steps  
were gone,

Rose the pale Queen, and in her anguish  
found

The casement: 'peradventure,' so she  
thought,

'If I might see his face, and not be seen.'  
And lo, he sat on horseback at the door!  
And near him the sad nuns with each a  
light

Stood, and he gave them charge about  
the Queen,

To guard and foster her for evermore.  
And while he spake to these his helm  
was lower'd,

To which for crest the golden dragon  
clung

Of Britain; so she did not see the face,  
Which then was as an angel's, but she  
saw,

Wet with the mists and smitten by the  
lights,

The Dragon of the great Pendragonship  
Blaze, making all the night a steam of  
fire.

And even then he turn'd; and more and  
more

The moony vapour rolling round the  
King,

Who seem'd the phantom of a Giant in  
it,

Enwound him fold by fold, and made  
him gray

And grayer, till himself became as mist  
Before her, moving ghostlike to his doom.

Then she stretch'd out her arms and  
cried aloud

'O Arthur!' there her voice brake sud-  
denly,

Then — as a stream that spouting from  
a cliff

Fails in mid-air, but gathering at the base  
Re-makes itself, and flashes down the  
vale —

Went on in passionate utterance:

'Gone — my lord!

Gone thro' my sin to slay and to be slain!  
And he forgave me, and I could not  
speak.

Farewell? I should have answer'd his  
farewell.

His mercy choked me. Gone, my lord  
 the King,  
 My own true lord! how dare I call him  
 mine?  
 The shadow of another cleaves to me,  
 And makes me one pollution: he, the  
 King,  
 Call'd me polluted: shall I kill myself?  
 What help in that? I cannot kill my  
 sin,  
 If soul be soul; nor can I kill my shame;  
 No, nor by living can I live it down.  
 The days will grow to weeks, the weeks  
 to months,  
 The months will add themselves and  
 make the years,  
 The years will roll into the centuries,  
 And mine will ever be a name of scorn.  
 I must not dwell on that defeat of fame.  
 Let the world be; that is but of the  
 world.  
 What else? what hope? I think there  
 was a hope,  
 Except he mock'd me when he spake  
 of hope;  
 His hope he call'd it; but he never  
 mocks,  
 For mockery is the fume of little hearts.  
 And blessed be the King, who hath for-  
 given  
 My wickedness to him, and left me hope  
 That in mine own heart I can live down  
 sin  
 And be his mate hereafter in the heavens  
 Before high God. Ah, great and gentle  
 lord,  
 Who wast, as is the conscience of a saint  
 Among his warring senses, to thy  
 knights—  
 To whom my false voluptuous pride, that  
 took  
 Full easily all impressions from below,  
 Would not look up, or half-despised the  
 height  
 To which I would not or I could not  
 climb—  
 I thought I could not breathe in that  
 fine air  
 That pure severity of perfect light—  
 I yearn'd for warmth and colour which  
 I found  
 In Lancelot—now I see thee what thou  
 art,

Thou art the highest and most human  
 too,  
 Not Lancelot nor another. Is there none  
 Will tell the King I love him tho' so  
 late?  
 Now—ere he goes to the great Battle?  
 none:  
 Myself must tell him in that purer life,  
 But now it were too daring. Ah my God,  
 What might I not have made of thy fair  
 world,  
 Had I but loved thy highest creature  
 here?  
 It was my duty to have loved the highest:  
 It surely was my profit had I known:  
 It would have been my pleasure had I  
 seen.  
 We needs must love the highest when  
 we see it,  
 Not Lancelot, nor another.'

Here her hand  
 Grasp'd, made her veil her eyes: she  
 look'd and saw  
 The novice, weeping, suppliant, and said  
 to her,  
 'Yea, little maid, for am I not forgiven?'  
 Then glancing up beheld the holy nuns  
 All round her, weeping; and her heart  
 was loosed  
 Within her, and she wept with these and  
 said,

'Ye know me then, that wicked one,  
 who broke  
 The vast design and purpose of the King.  
 O shut me round with narrowing nunnery-  
 walls,  
 Meek maidens, from the voices crying  
 "shame."  
 I must not scorn myself: he loves me  
 still.  
 Let no one dream but that he loves me  
 still.  
 So let me, if you do not shudder at me,  
 Nor shun to call me sister, dwell with  
 you;  
 Wear black and white, and be a nun  
 like you,  
 Fast with your fasts, not feasting with  
 your feasts;  
 Grieve with your griefs, not grieving at  
 your joys,

But not rejoicing; mingle with your rites;  
 Pray and be pray'd for; lie before your  
 shrines;  
 Do each low office of your holy house;  
 Walk your dim cloister, and distribute  
 dole  
 To poor sick people, richer in His eyes  
 Who ransom'd us, and haler too than I;  
 And treat their loathsome hurts and heal  
 mine own;  
 And so wear out in almsdeed and in  
 prayer  
 The sombre close of that voluptuous  
 day,  
 Which wrought the ruin of my lord the  
 King.'

She said: they took her to themselves;  
 and she  
 Still hoping, fearing, 'is it yet too late?'  
 Dwelt with them, till in time their Ab-  
 bess died.  
 Then she, for her good deeds and her  
 pure life,  
 And for the power of ministration in her,  
 And likewise for the high rank she had  
 borne,  
 Was chosen Abbess, there, an Abbess,  
 lived  
 For three brief years, and there, an Ab-  
 bess, past  
 To where beyond these voices there is  
 peace.

*End of 'The Round Table.'*

### THE PASSING OF ARTHUR.

THAT story which the bold Sir Bedivere,  
 First made and latest left of all the  
 knights,  
 Told, when the man was no more than a  
 voice  
 In the white winter of his age, to those  
 With whom he dwelt, new faces, other  
 minds.

For on their march to westward, Bedi-  
 vere,  
 Who slowly paced among the slumbering  
 host,  
 Heard in his tent the moanings of the  
 King:

'I found Him in the shining of the  
 stars,  
 I mark'd Him in the flowering of His  
 fields,  
 But in His ways with men I find Him not.  
 I waged His wars, and now I pass and die.  
 O me! for why is all around us here  
 As if some lesser god had made the world,  
 But had not force to shape it as he would,  
 Till the High God behold it from beyond,  
 And enter it, and make it beautiful?  
 Or else as if the world were wholly fair,  
 But that these eyes of men are dense and  
 dim,  
 And have not power to see it as it is:

Perchance, because we see not to the  
 close; —  
 For I, being simple, thought to work His  
 will,  
 And have but stricken with the sword in  
 vain;  
 And all whereon I lean'd in wife and  
 friend  
 Is traitor to my peace, and all my realm  
 Reels back into the beast, and is no more.  
 My God, thou hast forgotten me in my  
 death:  
 Nay — God my Christ — I pass but shall  
 not die.'

Then, ere that last weird battle in the  
 west,  
 There came on Arthur sleeping, Gawain  
 kill'd  
 In Lancelot's war, the ghost of Gawain  
 blown  
 Along a wandering wind, and past his ear  
 Went shrilling, 'Hollow, hollow all de-  
 light!  
 Hail, King! to-morrow thou shalt pass  
 away.  
 Farewell! there is an isle of rest for thee.  
 And I am blown along a wandering wind,  
 And hollow, hollow, hollow all delight.'  
 And fainter onward, like wild birds that  
 change

Their season in the night and wail their way  
 From cloud to cloud, down the long wind  
 the dream  
 Shrill'd; but in going mingled with dim  
 cries  
 Far in the moonlit haze among the hills,  
 As of some lonely city sack'd by night,  
 When all is lost, and wife and child with  
 wail  
 Pass to new lords; and Arthur woke and  
 call'd,  
 'Who spake? A dream. O light upon  
 the wind,  
 Thine, Gawain, was the voice — are these  
 dim cries  
 Thine? or doth all that haunts the waste  
 and wild  
 Mourn, knowing it will go along with  
 me?'

This heard the bold Sir Bedivere and  
 spake:  
 'O me, my King, let pass whatever will,  
 Elves, and the harmless glamour of the  
 field;  
 But in their stead thy name and glory  
 cling  
 To all high places like a golden cloud  
 For ever: but as yet thou shalt not pass.  
 Light was Gawain in life, and light in  
 death  
 Is Gawain, for the ghost is as the man;  
 And care not thou for dreams from him,  
 but rise —  
 I hear the steps of Modred in the west,  
 And with him many of thy people, and  
 knights  
 Once thine, whom thou hast loved, but  
 grosser grown  
 Than heathen, spitting at their vows and  
 thee.  
 Right well in heart they know thee for  
 the King.  
 Arise, go forth and conquer as of old.'

Then spake King Arthur to Sir Bedi-  
 vere:  
 'Far other is this battle in the west  
 Whereto we move, than when we strove  
 in youth,  
 And brake the petty kings, and fought  
 with Rome,

Or thrust the heathen from the Roman  
 wall,  
 And shook him thro' the north. Ill doom  
 is mine  
 To war against my people and my knights.  
 The king who fights his people fights him-  
 self.  
 And they my knights, who loved me once,  
 the stroke  
 That strikes them dead is as my death to  
 me.  
 Yet let us hence, and find or feel a way  
 Thro' this blind haze, which ever since I  
 saw  
 One lying in the dust at Almesbury,  
 Hath folded in the passes of the world.'

Then rose the King and moved his  
 host by night,  
 And ever push'd Sir Modred, league by  
 league,  
 Back to the sunset bound of Lyonesse —  
 A land of old upheaven from the abyss  
 By fire, to sink into the abyss again;  
 Where fragments of forgotten peoples  
 dwelt,  
 And the long mountains ended in a coast  
 Of ever-shifting sand, and far away  
 The phantom circle of a moaning sea.  
 There the pursuer could pursue no more,  
 And he that fled no further fly the King;  
 And there, that day when the great light  
 of heaven  
 Burn'd at his lowest in the rolling year,  
 On the waste sand by the waste sea they  
 closed.  
 Nor ever yet had Arthur fought a fight  
 Like this last, dim, weird battle of the  
 west.  
 A deathwhite mist slept over sand and  
 sea:  
 Whereof the chill, to him who breathed  
 it, drew  
 Down with his blood, till all his heart was  
 cold  
 With formless fear; and ev'n on Arthur  
 fell  
 Confusion, since he saw not whom he  
 fought.  
 For friend and foe were shadows in the  
 mist,  
 And friend slew friend not knowing whom  
 he slew;

And some had visions out of golden youth,  
 And some beheld the faces of old ghosts  
 Look in upon the battle; and in the mist  
 Was many a noble deed, many a base,  
 And chance and craft and strength in  
 single fights,  
 And ever and anon with host to host  
 Shocks, and the splintering spear, the  
 hard mail hewn,  
 Shield-breakings, and the clash of brands,  
 the crash  
 Of battleaxes on shatter'd helms, and  
 shrieks  
 After the Christ, of those who falling  
 down  
 Look'd up for heaven, and only saw the  
 mist;  
 And shouts of heathen and the traitor  
 knights,  
 Oaths, insult, filth, and monstrous blas-  
 phemies,  
 Sweat, writhings, anguish, labouring of  
 the lungs  
 In that close mist, and cryings for the  
 light,  
 Moans of the dying, and voices of the  
 dead.

Last, as by some one deathbed after  
 wail  
 Of suffering, silence follows, or thro' death  
 Or deathlike swoon, thus over all that  
 shore,  
 Save for some whisper of the seething  
 seas,  
 A dead hush fell; but when the dolorous  
 day  
 Grew drearier toward twilight falling,  
 came  
 A bitter wind, clear from the North, and  
 blew  
 The mist aside, and with that wind the  
 tide  
 Rose, and the pale King glanced across  
 the field  
 Of battle: but no man was moving there;  
 Nor any cry of Christian heard thereon,  
 Nor yet of heathen; only the wan wave  
 Brake in among dead faces, to and fro  
 Swaying the helpless hands, and up and  
 down  
 Tumbling the hollow helmets of the  
 fallen,

And shiver'd brands that once had fought  
 with Rome,  
 And rolling far along the gloomy shores  
 The voice of days of old and days to be.

Then spake King Arthur to Sir Bedi-  
 vere,  
 And whiter than the mist that all day  
 long  
 Had held the field of battle was the King:

'Hearest thou this great voice that  
 shakes the world,  
 And wastes the narrow realm whereon  
 we move,  
 And beats upon the faces of the dead,  
 My dead, as tho' they had not died for  
 me?—  
 O Bedivere, for on my heart hath fall'n  
 Confusion, till I know not what I am,  
 Nor whence I am, nor whether I be  
 King,  
 Behold, I seem but King among the  
 dead.'

Then spake the bold Sir Bedivere:  
 'My King,  
 King everywhere! and so the dead have  
 kings,  
 There also will I worship thee as King.  
 Yet still thy life is whole, and still I live  
 Who love thee; but who hates thee, he  
 that brought  
 The heathen back among us, yonder  
 stands,  
 Modred unharm'd, the traitor of thine  
 house.'

Then spake the King: 'My house hath  
 been my doom.  
 But call not thou this traitor of my house  
 Who hath but dwelt beneath one roof  
 with me.  
 My house are rather they who sware my  
 vows,  
 Yea, even while they brake them, own'd  
 me King.  
 And well for thee, saying in my dark  
 hour,  
 When all the purport of my throne hath  
 fail'd,  
 That quick or dead thou holdest me for  
 King.'



King am I, whatsoever be their cry;  
 And one last act of knighthood shalt thou  
 see  
 Yet, ere I pass.' And uttering this the  
 King  
 Made at the man: then Modred smote  
 his liege  
 Hard on that helm which many a heathen  
 sword  
 Had beaten thin; while Arthur at one  
 blow,  
 Striking the last stroke with Excalibur,  
 Slew him, and all but slain himself, he  
 fell.

So all day long the noise of battle  
 roll'd  
 Among the mountains by the winter sea;  
 Until King Arthur's Table, man by man,  
 Had fall'n in Lyonesse about their lord,  
 King Arthur. Then, because his wound  
 was deep,  
 The bold Sir Bedivere uplifted him,  
 And bore him to a chapel nigh the field,  
 A broken chancel with a broken cross,  
 That stood on a dark strait of barren  
 land:  
 On one side lay the Ocean, and on one  
 Laya great water, and the moon was full.

Then spake King Arthur to Sir Bedi-  
 vere:  
 'The sequel of to-day unsolders all  
 The goodliest fellowship of famous knights  
 Whereof this world holds record. Such  
 a sleep  
 They sleep—the men I loved. I think  
 that we  
 Shall never more, at any future time,  
 Delight our souls with talk of knightly  
 deeds,  
 Walking about the gardens and the halls  
 Of Camelot, as in the days that were.  
 I perish by this people which I made,—  
 Tho' Merlin sware that I should come  
 again  
 To rule once more; but, let what will be,  
 be,  
 I am so deeply smitten thro' the helm  
 That without help I cannot last till morn.  
 Thou therefore take my brand Excalibur,  
 Which was my pride: for thou remem-  
 berest how

In those old days, one summer noon, an  
 arm  
 Rose up from out the bosom of the lake,  
 Clothed in white samite, mystic, wonder-  
 ful,  
 Holding the sword—and how I row'd  
 across  
 And took it, and have worn it, like a  
 king;  
 And, wheresoever I am sung or told  
 In aftertime, this also shall be known:  
 But now delay not: take Excalibur,  
 And fling him far into the middle mere:  
 Watch what thou seest, and lightly bring  
 me word.'

To him replied the bold Sir Bedivere:  
 'It is not meet, Sir King, to leave thee  
 thus,  
 Aidless, alone, and smitten thro' the  
 helm—  
 A little thing may harm a wounded man;  
 Yet I thy hest will all perform at full,  
 Watch what I see, and lightly bring thee  
 word.'

So saying, from the ruin'd shrine he  
 slept,  
 And in the moon athwart the place of  
 tombs,  
 Where lay the mighty bones of ancient  
 men,  
 Old knights, and over them the sea-wind  
 sang  
 Shril, chill, with flakes of foam. He,  
 stepping down  
 By zigzag paths, and juts of pointed rock,  
 Came on the shining levels of the lake.

There drew he forth the brand Excali-  
 bur,  
 And o'er him, drawing it, the winter  
 moon,  
 Brightening the skirts of a long cloud,  
 ran forth  
 And sparkled keen with frost against the  
 hilt:  
 For all the haft twinkled with diamond  
 sparks,  
 Myriads of topaz-lights, and jacinth-work  
 Of subtlest jewellery. He gazed so long  
 That both his eyes were dazzled as he  
 stood,

This way and that dividing the swift  
mind;  
In act to throw : but at the last it seem'd  
Better to leave Excalibur conceal'd  
There in the many-knotted waterflags,  
That whistled stiff and dry about the  
marge.  
So strode he back slow to the wounded  
King.

Then spake King Arthur to Sir Bedi-  
vere:  
'Hast thou perform'd my mission which  
I gave?  
What is it thou hast seen? or what hast  
heard?'

And answer made the bold Sir Bedi-  
vere:  
'I heard the ripple washing in the reeds,  
And the wild water lapping on the crag.'

To whom replied King Arthur, faint  
and pale:  
'Thou hast betray'd thy nature and thy  
name,  
Not rendering true answer, as beseem'd  
Thy féalty, nor like a noble knight:  
For surer sign had follow'd, either hand,  
Or voice, or else a motion of the mere.  
This is a shameful thing for men to lie.  
Yet now, I charge thee, quickly go again,  
As thou art lief and dear, and do the thing  
I bade thee, watch, and lightly bring me  
word.'

Then went Sir Bedivere the second  
time  
Across the ridge, and paced beside the  
mere,  
Counting the dewy pebbles, fix'd in  
thought;  
But when he saw the wonder of the hilt,  
How curiously and strangely chased, he  
smote  
His palms together, and he cried aloud:

'And if indeed I cast the brand away,  
Surely a precious thing, one worthy note,  
Should thus be lost for ever from the  
earth,  
Which might have pleased the eyes of  
many men.

What good should follow this, if this  
were done?

What harm, undone? Deep harm to  
disobey,  
Seeing obedience is the bond of rule.  
Were it well to obey then, if a king  
demand  
An act unprofitable, against himself?  
The King is sick, and knows not what  
he does.

What record, or what relic of my lord  
Should be to aftertime, but empty breath  
And rumours of a doubt? But were this  
kept,

Stored in some treasure-house of mighty  
kings,  
Some one might show it at a joust of  
arms,

Saying, "King Arthur's sword, Excali-  
bur,  
Wrought by the lonely maiden of the  
Lake.

Nine years she wrought it, sitting in the  
deeps  
Upon the hidden bases of the hills."  
So might some old man speak in the  
aftertime

To all the people, winning reverence.  
But now much honour and much fame  
were lost.'

So spake he, clouded with his own  
conceit,  
And hid Excalibur the second time,  
And so strode back slow to the wounded  
King.

Then spoke King Arthur, breathing  
heavily:

'What is it thou hast seen? or what hast  
heard?'

And answer made the bold Sir Bedi-  
vere:

'I heard the water lapping on the crag,  
And the long ripple washing in the reeds.'

To whom replied King Arthur, much  
in wrath:

'Ah, miserable and unkind, untrue,  
Unknightly, traitor-hearted! Woe is me!  
Authority forgets a dying king,  
Laid widow'd of the power in his eye

That bow'd the will. I see thee what  
thou art,

For thou, the latest-left of all my knights,  
In whom should meet the offices of all,  
Thou wouldst betray me for the precious  
hilt;

Either from lust of gold, or like a girl  
Valuing the giddy pleasure of the eyes.  
Yet, for a man may fail in duty twice,  
And the third time may prosper, get thee  
hence:

But, if thou spare to fling Excalibur,  
I will arise and slay thee with my hands.'

Then quickly rose Sir Bedivere, and  
ran,  
And, leaping down the ridges lightly,  
plunged

Among the bulrush beds, and clutch'd  
the sword,  
And strongly wheel'd and threw it. The  
great brand

Made lightnings in the splendour of the  
moon,

And flashing round and round, and  
whirl'd in an arch,

Shot like a streamer of the northern  
morn,  
Seen where the moving isles of winter  
shock

By night, with noises of the Northern  
Sea.

So flash'd and fell the brand Excalibur:  
But ere he dipt the surface, rose an arm  
Clothed in white samite, mystic, won-  
derful,

And caught him by the hilt, and bran-  
dish'd him

Three times, and drew him under in the  
mere.

And lightly went the other to the King.

Then spoke King Arthur, drawing  
thicker breath:

'Now see I by thine eyes that this is  
done.

Speak out: what is it thou hast heard, or  
seen?'

And answer made the bold Sir Bedi-  
vere:

'Sir King, I closed mine eyelids, lest the  
gems

Should blind my purpose, for I never  
saw,

Nor shall see, here or elsewhere, till I die,  
Not tho' I live three lives of mortal men,  
So great a miracle as yonder hilt.

Then with both hands I flung him, wheel-  
ing him;

But when I look'd again, behold an arm,  
Clothed in white samite, mystic, won-  
derful,

That caught him by the hilt, and  
brandish'd him

Three times, and drew him under in the  
mere.'

And answer made King Arthur, breath-  
ing hard:

'My end draws nigh; 'tis time that I  
were gone.

Make broad thy shoulders to receive my  
weight,

And bear me to the margin; yet I fear  
My wound hath taken cold, and I shall  
die.'

So saying, from the pavement he half  
rose,

Slowly, with pain, reclining on his arm,  
And looking wistfully with wide blue eyes  
As in a picture. Him Sir Bedivere

Remorsefully regarded thro' his tears,  
And would have spoken, but he found  
not words;

Then took with care, and kneeling on  
one knee,

O'er both his shoulders drew the languid  
hands,

And rising bore him thro' the place of  
tombs.

But, as he walk'd, King Arthur panted  
hard,

Like one that feels a nightmare on his  
bed

When all the house is mute. So sigh'd  
the King,

Muttering and murmuring at his ear,  
'Quick, quick!

I fear it is too late, and I shall die.'

But the other swiftly strode from ridge  
to ridge,

Clothed with his breath, and looking, as  
he walk'd,

Larger than human on the frozen hills.  
He heard the deep behind him, and a cry  
Before. His own thought drove him like  
a goad.

Dry clash'd his harness in the icy caves  
And barren chasms, and all to left and  
right

The bare black cliff clang'd round him,  
as he based

His feet on juts of slippery crag that  
rang

Sharp-smitten with the dint of armed  
heels —

And on a sudden, lo! the level lake,  
And the long glories of the winter moon.

Then saw they how there hove a dusky  
barge,

Dark as a funeral scarf from stem to  
stern,

Beneath them; and descending they were  
ware

That all the decks were dense with stately  
forms,

Black-stoled, black-hooded, like a dream  
— by these

Three Queens with crowns of gold: and  
from them rose

A cry that shiver'd to the tingling stars,  
And, as it were one voice, an agony

Of lamentation, like a wind that shrills  
All night in a waste land, where no one

comes,  
Or hath come, since the making of the  
world.

Then murmur'd Arthur, 'Place me in  
the barge.'

So to the barge they came. There those  
three Queens

Put forth their hands, and took the King,  
and wept.

But she, that rose the tallest of them all  
And fairest, laid his head upon her lap,

And loosed the shatter'd casque, and  
chafed his hands,

And call'd him by his name, complaining  
loud,

And dropping bitter tears against a brow  
Striped with dark blood: for all his face

was white

And colourless, and like the wither'd  
moon

Smote by the fresh beam of the spring-  
ing east;

And all his greaves and cuisses dash'd  
with drops

Of onset; and the light and lustrous  
curls —

That made his forehead like a rising sun  
High from the dais-throne — were parch'd

with dust;

Or clotted into points and hanging loose,  
Mix'd with the knightly growth that

fringed his lips.

So like a shatter'd column lay the King;  
Not like that Arthur who, with lance in

rest,

From spur to plume a star of tourna-  
ment,

Shot thro' the lists at Camelot, and  
charged

Before the eyes of ladies and of kings.

Then loudly cried the bold Sir Bedi-  
vere:

'Ah! my Lord Arthur, whither shall I  
go?

Where shall I hide my forehead and my  
eyes?

For now I see the true old times are  
dead,

When every morning brought a noble  
chance,

And every chance brought out a noble  
knight.

Such times have been not since the light  
that led

The holy Elders with the gift of myrrh.

But now the whole Round Table is dis-  
solved

Which was an image of the mighty  
world,

And I, the last, go forth companionless,  
And the days darken round me, and the

years,

Among new men, strange faces, other  
minds.'

And slowly answer'd Arthur from the  
barge:

'The old order changeth, yielding place  
to new,

And God fulfils himself in many ways,  
Lest one good custom should corrupt

the world,

Comfort thyself : what comfort is in me?  
 I have lived my life, and that which I  
 have done  
 May He within himself make pure ! but  
 thou,  
 If thou shouldst never see my face again,  
 Pray for my soul. More things are  
 wrought by prayer  
 Than this world dreams of. Wherefore,  
 let thy voice  
 Rise like a fountain for me night and  
 day.  
 For what are men better than sheep or  
 goats  
 That nourish a blind life within the  
 brain,  
 If, knowing God, they lift not hands of  
 prayer  
 Both for themselves and those who call  
 them friend?  
 For so the whole round earth is every  
 way  
 Bound by gold chains about the feet of  
 God.  
 But now farewell. I am going a long  
 way  
 With these thou seest — if indeed I go  
 (For all my mind is clouded with a  
 doubt) —  
 To the island-valley of Avilion;  
 Where falls not hail, or rain, or any  
 snow.  
 Nor ever wind blows loudly; but it lies  
 Deep-meadow'd, happy, fair with orchard  
 lawns  
 And bowery hollows crown'd with sum-  
 mer sea,  
 Where I will heal me of my grievous  
 wound.'

So said he, and the barge with oar and  
 sail  
 Moved from the brink, like some full-  
 breasted swan  
 That, fluting a wild carol ere her death,  
 Ruffles her pure cold plume, and takes  
 the flood  
 With swarthy webs. Long stood Sir  
 Bedivere  
 Revolving many memories, till the hull  
 Look'd one black dot against the verge  
 of dawn,  
 And on the mere the wailing died away.

But when that moan had past for ever-  
 more,  
 The stillness of the dead world's winter  
 dawn  
 Amazed him, and he groan'd, 'The King  
 is gone.'  
 And therewithal came on him the weird  
 rhyme,  
 'From the great deep to the great deep  
 he goes.'

Whereat he slowly turn'd and slowly  
 clomb  
 The last hard footstep of that iron crag;  
 Thence mark'd the black hull moving  
 yet, and cried,  
 'He passes to be King among the dead,  
 And after healing of his grievous wound  
 He comes again; but — if he come no  
 more —  
 O me, be yon dark Queens in yon black  
 boat,  
 Who shriek'd and wail'd, the three  
 whereat we gazed .  
 On that high day, when, clothed with  
 living light,  
 They stood before his throne in silence,  
 friends  
 Of Arthur, who should help him at his  
 need?'

Then from the dawn it seem'd there  
 came, but faint  
 As from beyond the limit of the world,  
 Like the last echo born of a great cry,  
 Sounds, as if some fair city were one  
 voice  
 Around a king returning from his wars.

Thereat once more he moved about,  
 and clomb  
 Ev'n to the highest he could climb, and  
 saw,  
 Straining his eyes beneath an arch of  
 hand,  
 Or thought he saw, the speck that bare  
 the King,  
 Down that long water opening on the  
 deep  
 Somewhere far off, pass on and on, and go  
 From less to less and vanish into light.  
 And the new sun rose bringing the new  
 year.

## TO THE QUEEN.

O LOYAL to the royal in thyself,  
 And loyal to the land, as this to thee —  
 Bear witness, that rememberable day,  
 When, pale as yet, and fever-worn, the  
 Prince  
 Who scarce had pluck'd his flickering  
 life again  
 From halfway down the shadow of the  
 grave,  
 Past with thee thro' thy people and  
 their love,  
 And London roll'd one tide of joy thro'  
 all  
 Her trebled millions, and loud leagues of  
 man  
 And welcome! witness, too, the silent  
 cry,  
 The prayer of many a race and creed,  
 and clime —  
 Thunderless lightnings striking under  
 sea  
 From sunset and sunrise of all thy realm,  
 And that true North, whereof we lately  
 heard  
 A strain to shame us 'keep you to your-  
 selves;  
 So loyal is too costly! friends—your  
 love  
 Is but a burthen: loose the bond, and  
 go.'  
 Is this the tone of empire? here the faith  
 That made us rulers? this, indeed, her  
 voice  
 And meaning, whom the roar of Hougou-  
 mont  
 Left mightiest of all peoples under  
 heaven?  
 What shock has fool'd her since, that  
 she should speak  
 So feebly? wealthier — wealthier — hour  
 by hour!  
 The voice of Britain, or a sinking land,  
 Some third-rate isle half-lost among her  
 seas?  
*There* rang her voice, when the full city  
 peal'd  
 Thee and thy Prince! The loyal to their  
 crown  
 Are loyal to their own far sons, who love

Our ocean-empire with her boundless  
 homes  
 For ever-broadening England, and her  
 throne  
 In our vast Orient, and one isle, one  
 isle,  
 That knows not her own greatness: if  
 she knows  
 And dreads it we are fall'n.—But thou,  
 my Queen,  
 Not for itself, but thro' thy living love  
 For one to whom I made it o'er his grave  
 Sacred, accept this old imperfect tale,  
 New-old, and shadowing Sense at war  
 with Soul  
 Rather than that gray king, whose name,  
 a ghost,  
 Streams like a cloud, man-shaped, from  
 mountain peak,  
 And cleaves to cairn and cromlech still;  
 or him  
 Of Geoffrey's book, or him of Malleor's,  
 one  
 Touch'd by the adulterous finger of a  
 time  
 That hover'd between war and wanton-  
 ness,  
 And crownings and dethronements: take  
 withal  
 Thy poet's blessing, and his trust that  
 Heaven  
 Will blow the tempest in the distance  
 back  
 From thine and ours: for some are scared,  
 who mark,  
 Or wisely or unwisely, signs of storm,  
 Waverings of every vane with every  
 wind,  
 And wordy trucklings to the transient  
 hour,  
 And fierce or careless looseners of the  
 faith,  
 And Softness breeding scorn of simple  
 life,  
 Or Cowardice, the child of lust for gold,  
 Or Labour, with a groan and not a  
 voice,  
 Or Art with poisonous honey stol'n from  
 France,



And that which knows, but careful for  
itself,  
And that which knows not, ruling that  
which knows  
To its own harm: the goal of this great  
world  
Lies beyond sight: yet — if our slowly-  
grown  
And crown'd Republic's crowning com-  
mon-sense,

That saved her many times, not fail —  
their fears  
Are morning shadows huger than the  
shapes  
That cast them, not those gloomier which  
forego  
The darkness of that battle in the  
West,  
Where all of high and holy dies away.

## THE LOVER'S TALE.

THE original Preface to 'The Lover's Tale' states that it was composed in my nineteenth year. Two only of the three parts then written were printed, when, feeling the imperfection of the poem, I withdrew it from the press. One of my friends, however, who, boylike, admired the boy's work, distributed among our common associates of that hour some copies of these two parts, without my knowledge, without the omissions and amendments which I had in contemplation, and marred by the many misprints of the compositor. Seeing that these two parts have of late been mercilessly pirated, and that what I had deemed scarce worthy to live is not allowed to die, may I not be pardoned if I suffer the whole poem at last to come into the light — accompanied with a reprint of the sequel — a work of my mature life — 'The Golden Supper'?

May 1879.

### ARGUMENT.

JULIAN, whose cousin and foster-sister, Camilla, has been wedded to his friend and rival, Lionel, endeavours to narrate the story of his own love for her, and the strange sequel. He speaks (in Parts II. and III.) of having been haunted by visions and the sound of bells, tolling for a funeral, and at last ringing for a marriage; but he breaks away, overcome, as he approaches the Event, and a witness to it completes the tale.

#### I.

HERE far away, seen from the topmost  
cliff,  
Filling with purple gloom the vacancies  
Between the tufted hills, the sloping seas  
Hung in mid-heaven, and half-way down  
rare sails,  
White as white clouds, floated from sky  
to sky.  
Oh! pleasant breast of waters, quiet bay,  
Like to a quiet mind in the loud world,  
Where the chafed breakers of the outer  
sea  
Sank powerless, as anger falls aside  
And withers on the breast of peaceful  
love;  
Thou didst receive the growth of pines  
that fledged  
The hills that watch'd thee, as Love  
watcheth Love,

In thine own essence, and delight thyself  
To make it wholly thine on sunny days.  
Keep thou thy name of 'Lover's Bay.'  
See, sirs,  
Even now the Goddess of the Past, that  
takes  
The heart, and sometimes touches but  
one string  
That quivers, and is silent, and sometimes  
Sweeps suddenly all its half-moulder'd  
chords  
To some old melody, begins to play  
That air which pleased her first. I feel  
thy breath;  
I come, great Mistress of the ear and eye:  
Thy breath is of the pinewood; and tho'  
years  
Have hollow'd out a deep and stormy  
strait  
Betwixt the native land of Love and me,  
Breathe but a little on me, and the sail

Will draw me to the rising of the sun,  
The lucid chambers of the morning star,  
And East of Life.

Permit me, friend, I prythee,  
To pass my hand across my brows, and  
muse  
On those dear hills, that never more will  
meet

The sight that throbs and aches beneath  
my touch,  
As tho' there beat a heart in either eye;  
For when the outer lights are darken'd  
thus,

The memory's vision hath a keener edge.  
It grows upon me now — the semicircle  
Of dark-blue waters and the narrow fringe  
Of curving beach — its wreaths of drip-  
ping green —

Its pale pink shells — the summerhouse  
aloft

That open'd on the pines with doors of  
glass,

A mountain nest — the pleasure-boat that  
rock'd,

Light-green with its own shadow, keel to  
keel,

Upon the dappled dimplings of the  
wave,

That blanch'd upon its side.

O Love, O Hope!

They come, they crowd upon me all at  
once —

Moved from the cloud of unforgotten  
things,

That sometimes on the horizon of the  
mind

Lies folded, often sweeps athwart in  
storm —

Flash upon flash they lighten thro' me —  
days

Of dewy dawning and the amber eyes  
When thou and I, Camilla, thou and I  
Were borne about the bay or safely  
moor'd

Beneath a low-brow'd cavern, where the  
tide

Plash'd, sapping its worn ribs; and all  
without

The slowly-riding rollers on the cliffs  
Clash'd, calling to each other, and thro'  
the arch

Down those loud waters, like a setting  
star,

Mixt with the gorgeous west the light-  
house shone,

And silver-smiling Venus ere she fell  
Would often loiter in her balmy blue,

To crown it with herself.

Here, too, my love

Waver'd at anchor with me, when day  
hung

From his mid-dome in Heaven's airy  
halls;

Gleams of the water-circles as they broke,  
Flicker'd like doubtful smiles about her  
lips,

Quiver'd a flying glory on her hair,  
Leapt like a passing thought across her  
eyes;

And mine with one that will not pass,  
till earth

And heaven pass too, dwelt on my heaven,  
a face

Most starry-fair, but kindled from within  
As 'twere with dawn. She was dark-  
hair'd, dark-eyed:

Oh, such dark eyes! a single glance of  
them

Will govern a whole life from birth to  
death,

Careless of all things else, led on with light  
In trances and in visions: look at them,  
You lose yourself in utter ignorance;

You cannot find their depth; for they  
go back,

And farther back, and still withdraw  
themselves

Quite into the deep soul, that evermore  
Fresh springing from her fountains in the  
brain,

Still pouring thro', floods with redundant  
life

Her narrow portals.

Trust me, long ago

I should have died, if it were possible  
To die in gazing on that perfectness  
Which I do bear within me: I had died,  
But from my farthest lapse, my latest ebb,  
Thine image, like a charm of light and  
strength

Upon the waters, push'd me back again  
On these deserted sands of barren life.

Tho' from the deep vault where the heart  
of Hope  
Fell into dust, and crumbled in the dark —  
Forgetting how to render beautiful  
Her countenance with quick and health-  
ful blood —  
Thou didst not sway me upward; could  
I perish  
While thou, a meteor of the sepulchre,  
Didst swathe thyself all round Hope's  
quiet urn  
For ever? He, that saith it, hath o'er-  
stept  
The slippery footing of his narrow wit,  
And fall'n away from judgment. Thou  
art light,  
To which my spirit leaneth all her flowers,  
And length of days, and immortality  
Of thought, and freshness ever self-  
renew'd.  
For Time and Grief abode too long with  
Life,  
And, like all other friends i' the world, at  
last  
They grew weary of her fellowship:  
So Time and Grief did beckon unto  
Death,  
And Death drew nigh and beat the doors  
of Life;  
But thou didst sit alone in the inner house,  
A wakeful portress, and didst parle with  
Death, —  
'This is a charmed dwelling which I  
hold;'  
So Death gave back, and would no fur-  
ther come.  
Yet is my life nor in the present time,  
Nor in the present place. To me alone,  
Push'd from his chair of regal heritage,  
The Present is the vassal of the Past:  
So that, in that I *have* lived, do I live,  
And cannot die, and am, in having been —  
A portion of the pleasant yesterday,  
Thrust forward on to-day and out of  
place;  
A body journeying onward, sick with  
toil,  
The weight as if of age upon my limbs,  
The grasp of hopeless grief about my  
heart,  
And all the senses weaken'd, save in that,  
Which long ago they had glean'd and  
garner'd up

Into the granaries of memory —  
The clear brow, bulwark of the precious  
brain,  
Chink'd as you see, and seam'd — and all  
the while  
The light soul twines and mingles with  
the growths  
Of vigorous early days, attracted, won,  
Married, made one with, molten into all  
The beautiful in Past of act or place,  
And like the all-enduring camel, driven  
Far from the diamond fountain by the  
palms,  
Who toils across the middle moonlit  
nights,  
Or when the white heats of the blinding  
noons  
Beat from the concave sand; yet in him  
keeps  
A draught of that sweet fountain that he  
loves,  
To stay his feet from falling, and his spirit  
From bitterness of death.

Ye ask me, friends,  
When I began to love. How should I  
tell you?  
Or from the after-fulness of my heart,  
Flow back again unto my slender spring  
And first of love, tho' every turn and  
depth  
Between is clearer in my life than all  
Its present flow. Ye know not what ye  
ask.  
How should the broad and open flower  
tell  
What sort of bud it was, when, prest  
together  
In its green sheath, close-lapt in silken  
folds,  
It seem'd to keep its sweetness to itself,  
Yet was not the less sweet for that it  
seem'd?  
For young Life knows not when young  
Life was born,  
But takes it all for granted: neither Love,  
Warm in the heart, his cradle, can re-  
member  
Love in the womb, but resteth satisfied,  
Looking on her that brought him to the  
light:  
Or as men know not when they fall asleep  
Into delicious dreams, our other life,

So know I not when I began to love.  
 This is my sum of knowledge — that my  
     love  
 Grew with myself — say rather, was my  
     growth,  
 My inward sap, the hold I have on earth,  
 My outward circling air wherewith I  
     breathe,  
 Which yet upholds my life, and evermore  
 Is to me daily life and daily death:  
 For how should I have lived and not  
     have loved?  
 Can ye take off the sweetness from the  
     flower,  
 The colour and the sweetness from the  
     rose,  
 And place them by themselves; or set  
     apart  
 Their motions and their brightness from  
     the stars,  
 And then point out the flower or the star?  
 Or build a wall betwixt my life and love,  
 And tell me where I am? 'Tis even  
     thus:  
 In that I live I love; because I love  
 I live: whate'er is fountain to the one  
 Is fountain to the other; and whene'er  
 Our God unknots the riddle of the one,  
 There is no shade or fold of mystery  
 Swathing the other.

Many, many years

(For they seem many and my most of  
     life,  
 And well I could have linger'd in that  
     porch,  
 So unproportion'd to the dwelling-place),  
 In the Maydews of childhood, opposite  
 The flush and dawn of youth, we lived  
     together,  
 Apart, alone together on those hills.

Before he saw my day my father died,  
 And he was happy that he saw it not;  
 But I and the first daisy on his grave  
 From the same clay came into light at  
     once.  
 As Love and I do number equal years,  
 So she, my love, is of an age with me.  
 How like each other was the birth of  
     each!  
 On the same morning, almost the same  
     hour,

Under the selfsame aspect of the stars,  
 (Oh falsehood of all starcraft!) we were  
     born.  
 How like each other was the birth of  
     each!  
 The sister of my mother — she that bore  
 Camilla close beneath her beating heart,  
 Which to the imprison'd spirit of the child,  
 With its true-touched pulses in the flow  
 And hourly visitation of the blood,  
 Sent notes of preparation manifold,  
 And mellow'd echoes of the outer world —  
 My mother's sister, mother of my love,  
 Who had a twofold claim upon my heart,  
 One twofold mightier than the other was,  
 In giving so much beauty to the world,  
 And so much wealth as God had charged  
     her with —  
 Loathing to put it from herself for ever,  
 Left her own life with it; and dying thus,  
 Crown'd with her highest act the placid  
     face  
 And breathless body of her good deeds  
     past.

So were we born, so orphan'd. She  
     was motherless  
 And I without a father. So from each  
 Of those two pillars which from earth  
     uphold  
 Our childhood, one had fallen away, and  
     all  
 The careful burthen of our tender years  
 Trembled upon the other. He that gave  
 Her life, to me delightedly fulfill'd  
 All lovingkindnesses, all offices  
 Of watchful care and trembling tender-  
     ness.  
 He waked for both: he pray'd for both:  
     he slept.  
 Dreaming of both: nor was his love the  
     less  
 Because it was divided, and shot forth  
 Boughs on each side, laden with whole-  
     some shade,  
 Wherein we nested sleeping or awake,  
 And sang aloud the matin-song of life.

She was my foster-sister: on one arm  
 The flaxen ringlets of our infancies  
 Wander'd, the while we rested: one soft  
     lap  
 Pillow'd us both: a common light of eyes

Was on us as we lay: our baby lips,  
 Kissing one bosom, ever drew from thence  
 The stream of life, one stream, one life,  
     one blood,  
 One sustenance, which, still as thought  
     grew large,  
 Still larger moulding all the house of  
     thought,  
 Made all our tastes, and fancies like,  
     perhaps —  
 All — all but one; and strange to me,  
     and sweet,  
 Sweet thro' strange years to know that  
     whatsoe'er  
 Our general mother meant for me alone,  
 Our mutual mother dealt to both of us:  
 So what was earliest mine in earliest life,  
 I shared with her in whom myself remains.

As was our childhood, so our infancy,  
 They tell me, was a very miracle  
 Of fellow-feeling and communion.  
 They tell me that we would not be  
     alone, —

We cried when we were parted; when I  
     wept,  
 Her smile lit up the rainbow on my tears,  
 Stay'd on the cloud of sorrow; that we  
     loved

The sound of one another's voices more  
 Than the gray cuckoo loves his name,  
     and learn'd

To lip in tune together; that we slept  
 In the same cradle always, face to face,  
 Heart beating time to heart, lip pressing  
     lip,

Folding each other, breathing on each  
     other,  
 Dreaming together (dreaming of each  
     other

They should have added), till the morning  
     light

Sloped thro' the pines, upon the dewy  
     pane

Falling, unseal'd our eyelids, and we  
     woke

To gaze upon each other. If this be  
     true,

At thought of which my whole soul  
     languishes

And faints, and hath no pulse, no breath  
     — as tho'

A man in some still garden should infuse  
 Rich atar in the bosom of the rose,

Till, drunk with its own wine, and over-  
     full

Of sweetness, and in smelling of itself,  
 It fall on its own thorns — if this be true —  
 And that way my wish leads me ever-  
     more

Still to believe it — 'tis so sweet a thought,  
 Why in the utter stillness of the soul  
 Doth question'd memory answer not,  
     nor tell

Of this our earliest, our closest-drawn,  
 Most loveliest, earthly-heavenliest har-  
     mony?

O blossom'd portal of the lonely house,  
 Green prelude, April promise, glad new-  
     year

Of Being, which with earliest violets  
 And lavish carol of clear-throated larks  
 Fill'd all the March of life! — I will not  
     speak of thee,

These have not seen thee, these can never  
     know thee,

They cannot understand me. Pass we  
     then

A term of eighteen years. Ye would but  
     laugh,

If I should tell you how I hoard in  
     thought

The faded rhymes and scraps of ancient  
     crones,

Gray relics of the nurseries of the world,  
 Which are as gems set in my memory,  
 Because she learnt them with me; or  
     what use

To know her father left us just before  
 The daffodil was blown? or how we  
     found

The dead man cast upon the shore? All  
     this

Seems to the quiet daylight of your minds  
 But cloud and smoke, and in the dark of  
     mine

Is traced with flame. Move with me to  
     the event.

There came a glorious morning, such a  
     one

As dawns but once a season. Mercury  
 On such a morning would have flung  
     himself

From cloud to cloud, and swum with  
     balanced wings

To some tall mountain: when I said to  
     her,

'A day for Gods to stoop,' she answered,  
 'Ay,  
 And men to soar:' for as that other  
 gazed,  
 Shading his eyes till all the fiery cloud,  
 The prophet and the chariot and the  
 steeds,  
 Suck'd into oneness like a little star  
 Were drunk into the inmost blue, we  
 stood,  
 When first we came from out the pines at  
 noon,  
 With hands for eaves, uplooking and  
 almost  
 Waiting to see some blessed shape in  
 heaven,  
 So bathed we were in brilliance. Never  
 yet  
 Before or after have I known the spring  
 Pour with such sudden deluges of light  
 Into the middle summer; for that day  
 Love, rising, shook his wings, and charged  
 the winds  
 With spiced May-sweets from bound to  
 bound, and blew  
 Fresh fire into the sun, and from within  
 Burst thro' the heated buds, and sent his  
 soul  
 Into the songs of birds, and touch'd far-  
 off  
 His mountain-altars, his high hills, with  
 flame  
 Milder and purer.

Thro' the rocks we wound:  
 The great pine shook with lonely sounds  
 of joy  
 That came on the sea-wind. As moun-  
 tain streams  
 Our bloods ran free: the sunshine seem'd  
 to brood  
 More warmly on the heart than on the  
 brow.  
 We often paused, and, looking back, we  
 saw  
 The clefts and openings in the mountains  
 fill'd  
 With the blue valley and the glistening  
 brooks,  
 And all the low dark groves, a land of  
 love!  
 A land of promise, a land of memory,  
 A land of promise flowing with the milk

And honey of delicious memories!  
 And down to sea, and far as eye could  
 ken,  
 Each way from verge to verge a Holy  
 Land,  
 Still growing holier as you near'd the bay,  
 For there the Temple stood.

When we had reach'd  
 The grassy platform on some hill, I  
 stoop'd,  
 I gather'd the wild herbs, and for her  
 brows  
 And mine made garlands of the selfsame  
 flower,  
 Which she took smiling, and with my  
 work thus  
 Crown'd her clear forehead. Once or  
 twice she told me  
 (For I remember all things) to let grow  
 The flowers that run poison in their  
 veins.  
 She said, 'The evil flourish in the world.'  
 Then playfully she gave herself the lie—  
 'Nothing in nature is unbeautiful;  
 So, brother, pluck and spare not.' So I  
 wove  
 Ev'n the dull-blooded poppy-stem, 'whose  
 flower,  
 Hued with the scarlet of a fierce sunrise,  
 Like to the wild youth of an evil prince,  
 Is without sweetness, but who crowns  
 himself  
 Above the naked poisons of his heart  
 In his old age.' A graceful thought of  
 hers  
 Grav'n on my fancy! And oh, how like  
 a nymph,  
 A stately mountain nymph she look'd!  
 how native  
 Unto the hills she trod on! While I  
 gazed  
 My coronal slowly disentrined itself  
 And fell between us both; tho' while I  
 gazed  
 My spirit leap'd as with those thrills of  
 bliss  
 That strike across the soul in prayer, and  
 show us  
 That we are surely heard. Methought a  
 light  
 Burst from the garland I had wov'n, and  
 stood



A solid glory on her bright black hair;  
 A light methought broke from her dark,  
     dark eyes,  
 And shot itself into the singing winds;  
 A mystic light flash'd ev'n from her white  
     robe  
 As from a glass in the sun, and fell about  
 My footsteps on the mountains.

Last we came

To what our people call 'The Hill of  
 Woe.'

A bridge is there, that, look'd at from  
     beneath  
 Seems but a cobweb filament to link  
 The yawning of an earthquake-cloven  
     chasm.

And thence one night, when all the winds  
     were loud,

A woful man (for so the story went)  
 Had thrust his wife and child and dash'd  
     himself.

Into the dizzy depth below. Below,  
 Fierce in the strength of far descent, a  
     stream

Flies with a shatter'd foam along the  
     chasm.

The path was perilous, loosely strown  
     with crags:

We mounted slowly; yet to both there  
     came

The joy of life in steepness overcome,  
 And victories of ascent, and looking  
     down

On all that had look'd down on us; and  
     joy

In breathing nearer heaven; and joy to  
     me,

High over all the azure-circled earth,  
 To breathe with her as if in heaven itself;  
 And more than joy that I to her became  
 Her guardian and her angel, raising her  
 Still higher, past all peril, until she saw  
 Beneath her feet the region far away,  
 Beyond the nearest mountain's bosky  
     brows,

Arise in open prospect — heath and hill,  
 And hollow lined and wooded to the lips,  
 And steep-down walls of battlemented  
     rock

Gilded with broom, or shatter'd into  
     spires,

And glory of broad waters interfused,

Whence rose as it were breath and steam  
     of gold,

And over all the great wood rioting  
 And climbing, streak'd or starr'd at  
     intervals

With falling brook or blossom'd bush —  
     and last,

Framing the mighty landscape to the  
     west,

A purple range of mountain-cones, be-  
     tween

Whose interspaces gush'd in blinding  
     bursts

The incorporate blaze of sun and sea.

At length

Descending from the point and standing  
     both,

There on the tremulous bridge, that from  
     beneath

Had seem'd a gossamer filament up in air,  
 We paused amid the splendour. All the  
     west

And ev'n unto the middle south was  
     ribb'd

And barr'd with bloom on bloom. The  
     sun below,

Held for a space 'twixt cloud and wave,  
     shower'd down

Rays of a mighty circle, weaving over  
 That various wilderness a tissue of light  
 Unparallel'd. On the other side, the  
     moon,

Half-melted into thin blue air, stood still,  
 And pale and fibrous as a wither'd leaf,  
 Nor yet endured in presence of His eyes  
 To indue his lustre; most unloverlike,  
 Since in his absence full of light and joy,  
 And giving light to others. But this  
     most,

Next to her presence whom I loved so  
     well,

Spoke loudly even into my inmost heart  
 As to my outward hearing: the loud  
     stream,

Forth issuing from his portals in the crag  
 (A visible link unto the home of my  
     heart),

Ran amber toward the west, and nigh  
     the sea

Parting my own loved mountains was  
     received,

Shorn of its strength, into the sympathy

Of that small bay, which out to open  
 main  
 Glow'd intermingling close beneath the  
 sun.  
 Spirit of Love! that little hour was bound  
 Shut in from Time, and dedicate to  
 thee:  
 Thy fires from heaven had touch'd it,  
 and the earth  
 They fell on became hallow'd evermore.

We turn'd: our eyes met: hers were  
 bright, and mine  
 Were dim with floating tears, that shot  
 the sunset  
 In lightnings round me; and my name  
 was borne  
 Upon her breath. Henceforth my name  
 has been  
 A hallow'd memory like the names of  
 old,  
 A centr'd, glory-circled memory,  
 And a peculiar treasure, brooking not  
 Exchange or currency: and in that hour  
 A hope flow'd round me, like a golden  
 mist  
 Charm'd amid eddies of melodious airs,  
 A moment, ere the onward whirlwind  
 shatter it,  
 Waver'd and floated—which was less  
 than Hope,  
 Because it lack'd the power of perfect  
 Hope;  
 But which was more and higher than all  
 Hope,  
 Because all other Hope had lower aim;  
 Even that this name to which her gracious  
 lips  
 Did lend such gentle utterance, this one  
 name,  
 In some obscure hereafter, might in-  
 wreath  
 (How lovelier, nobler then!) her life, her  
 love,  
 With my life, love, soul, spirit, and heart  
 and strength.  
 'Brother,' she said, 'let this be call'd  
 henceforth  
 The Hill of Hope;' and I replied, 'O  
 sister,  
 My will is one with thine; the Hill of  
 Hope.'  
 Nevertheless, we did not change the name.

I did not speak: I could not speak my  
 love.  
 Love lieth deep: Love dwells not in lip-  
 depths.  
 Love wraps his wings on either side the  
 heart,  
 Constraining it with kisses close and warm,  
 Absorbing all the incense of sweet thoughts  
 So that they pass not to the shrine of  
 sound.  
 Else had the life of that delighted hour  
 Drunk in the largeness of the utterance  
 Of Love; but how should Earthly meas-  
 ure mete  
 The Heavenly-unmeasured or unlimited  
 Love,  
 Who scarce can tune his high majestic  
 sense  
 Unto the thundersong that wheels the  
 spheres,  
 Scarce living in the Æolian harmony,  
 And flowing odour of the spacious air,  
 Scarce housed within the circle of this  
 Earth,  
 Be cabin'd up in words and syllables,  
 Which pass with that which breathes  
 them? Sooner Earth  
 Might go round Heaven, and the strait  
 girth of Time  
 Inswathe the fulness of Eternity,  
 Than language grasp the infinite of Love.

O day which did enwomb that happy  
 hour,  
 Thou art blessed in the years, divinest day!  
 O Genius of that hour which dost uphold  
 Thy coronal of glory like a God,  
 Amid thy melancholy mates far-seen,  
 Who walk before thee, ever turning round  
 To gaze upon thee till their eyes are dim  
 With dwelling on the light and depth of  
 thine,  
 Thy name is ever worshipp'd among  
 hours!  
 Had I died then, I had not seem'd to die,  
 For bliss stood round me like the light of  
 Heaven,—  
 Had I died then, I had not known the  
 death;  
 Yea had the Power from whose right  
 hand the light  
 Of Life issueth, and from whose left hand  
 floweth

The Shadow of Death, perennial effluences,  
 Whereof to all that draw the wholesome air,  
 Somewhile the one must overflow the other;  
 Then had he stemm'd my day with night,  
 and driven  
 My current to the fountain whence it sprang,—  
 Even his own abiding excellence —  
 On me, methinks, that shock of gloom had fall'n  
 Unfelt, and in this glory I had merged  
 The other, like the sun I gazed upon,  
 Which seeming for the moment due to death,  
 And dipping his head low beneath the verge,  
 Yet bearing round about him his own day,  
 In confidence of unabated strength,  
 Steppeth from Heaven to Heaven, from light to light,  
 And holdeth his undimmed forehead far  
 Into a clearer zenith, pure of cloud.

We trod the shadow of the downward hill;  
 We past from light to dark. On the other side  
 Is scoop'd a cavern and a mountain hall,  
 Which none have fathom'd. If you go far in  
 (The country people rumour) you may hear  
 The moaning of the woman and the child,  
 Shut in the secret chambers of the rock.  
 I too have heard a sound — perchance of streams  
 Running far on within its inmost halls,  
 The home of darkness; but the cavern-mouth,  
 Half overtrailed with a wanton weed,  
 Gives birth to a brawling brook, that passing lightly  
 Adown a natural stair of tangled roots,  
 Is presently received in a sweet grave  
 Of eglantines, a place of burial  
 Far lovelier than its cradle; for unseen,  
 But taken with the sweetness of the place,  
 It makes a constant bubbling melody  
 That drowns the nearer echoes. Lower down

Spreads out a little lake, that, flooding,  
 leaves  
 Low banks of yellow sand; and from the woods  
 That belt it rise three dark, tall cy-  
 presses,—  
 Three cypresses, symbols of mortal woe,  
 That men plant over graves.

Hither we came,  
 And sitting down upon the golden moss,  
 Held converse sweet and low — low con-  
 verse sweet,  
 In which our voices bore least part. The wind  
 Told a lovetale beside us, how he woo'd  
 The waters, and the waters answering  
 lisp'd  
 To kisses of the wind, that, sick with  
 love,  
 Fainted at intervals, and grew again  
 To utterance of passion. Ye cannot  
 shape  
 Fancy so fair as is this memory.  
 Methought all excellence that ever was  
 Had drawn herself from many thousand  
 years,  
 And all the separate Edens of this earth,  
 To centre in this place and time. I  
 listen'd,  
 And her words stole with most prevailing  
 sweetness  
 Into my heart, as thronging fancies come  
 To boys and girls when summer days are  
 new,  
 And soul and heart and body are all at  
 ease:  
 What marvel my Camilla told me all?  
 It was so happy an hour, so sweet a place,  
 And I was as the brother of her blood,  
 And by that name I moved upon her  
 breath;  
 Dear name, which had too much of  
 nearness in it  
 And heralded the distance of this time!  
 At first her voice was very sweet and low,  
 As if she were afraid of utterance;  
 But in the onward current of her speech,  
 (As echoes of the hollow-banked brooks  
 Are fashion'd by the channel which they  
 keep),  
 Her words did of their meaning borrow  
 sound,

Her cheek did catch the colour of her words.  
 I heard and trembled, yet I could but hear;  
 My heart paused—my raised eyelids would not fall,  
 But still I kept my eyes upon the sky.  
 I seem'd the only part of Time stood still,  
 And saw the motion of all other things;  
 While her words, syllable by syllable,  
 Like water, drop by drop, upon my ear  
 Fell; and I wish'd, yet wish'd her not to speak;  
 But she spake on, for I did name no wish,  
 What marvel my Camilla told me all  
 Her maiden dignities of Hope and Love—  
 'Perchance,' she said, 'return'd.' Even  
 then the stars  
 Did tremble in their stations as I gazed;  
 But she spake on, for I did name no wish,  
 No wish—no hope. Hope was not wholly dead,  
 But breathing hard at the approach of  
 Death,—  
 Camilla, my Camilla, who was mine  
 No longer in the dearest sense of mine—  
 For all the secret of her inmost heart,  
 And all the maiden empire of her mind,  
 Lay like a map before me, and I saw  
 There, where I hoped myself to reign as king,  
 There, where that day I crown'd myself  
 as king,  
 There in my realm and even on my throne,  
*Another!* then it seem'd as tho' a link  
 Of some tight chain within my inmost  
 frame  
 Was riven in twain: that life I heeded  
 not  
 Flow'd from me, and the darkness of the  
 grave,  
 The darkness of the grave and utter  
 night,  
 Did swallow up my vision; at her feet,  
 Even the feet of her I loved, I fell,  
 Smit with exceeding sorrow unto Death.

Then had the earth beneath me yawning  
 cloven  
 With such a sound as when an iceberg  
 splits

From cope to base—had Heaven from  
 all her doors,  
 With all her golden thresholds clashing,  
 roll'd  
 Her heaviest thunder—I had lain as  
 dead,  
 Mute, blind and motionless as then I  
 lay;  
 Dead, for henceforth there was no life  
 for me!  
 Mute, for henceforth what use were  
 words to me!  
 Blind, for the day was as the night to  
 me!  
 The night to me was kinder than the  
 day;  
 The night in pity took away my day,  
 Because my grief as yet was newly born  
 Of eyes too weak to look upon the  
 light;  
 And thro' the hasty notice of the ear  
 Frail Life was startled from the tender  
 love  
 Of him she brooded over. Would I had  
 lain  
 Until the plaited ivy-tress had wound  
 Round my worn limbs, and the wild brier  
 had driven  
 Its knotted thorns thro' my unpaining  
 brows,  
 Leaning its roses on my faded eyes.  
 The wind had blown above me, and the  
 rain  
 Had fall'n upon me, and the gilded  
 snake  
 Had nestled in this bosom-throne of  
 Love,  
 But I had been at rest for evermore.

Long time entrancement held me. All  
 too soon  
 Life (like a wanton too-officious friend,  
 Who will not *hear* denial, vain and rude  
 With proffer of unwish'd-for services)  
 Entering all the avenues of sense  
 Past thro' into his citadel, the brain,  
 With hated warmth of apprehensiveness.  
 And first the chillness of the sprinkled  
 brook  
 Smote on my brows, and then I seem'd  
 to hear  
 Its murmur, as the drowning seaman  
 hears,

Who with his head below the surface  
dropt

Listens the muffled booming indistinct  
Of the confused floods, and dimly knows  
His head shall rise no more: and then  
came in

The white light of the weary moon  
above,

Diffused and molten into flaky cloud.  
Was my sight drunk that it did shape to  
me

Him who should own that name? Were  
it not well

If so be that the echo of that name  
Ringing within the fancy had updrawn  
A fashion and a phantasm of the form  
It should attach to? Phantom!—had  
the ghastliest

That ever lusted for a body, sucking  
The foul steam of the grave to thicken  
by it,

There in the shuddering moonlight  
brought its face

And what it has for eyes as close to  
mine

As he did—better that than his, than he  
The friend, the neighbour, Lionel, the  
beloved,

The loved, the lover, the happy Lionel,  
The low-voiced, tender-spirited Lionel,  
All joy, to whom my agony was a joy.

O how her choice did leap forth from his  
eyes!

O how her love did clothe itself in smiles  
About his lips! and—not one moment's  
grace—

Then when the effect weigh'd seas upon  
my head

To come my way! to twit me with the  
cause!

Was not the land as free thro' all her  
ways

To him as me? Was not his wont to  
walk

Between the going light and growing  
night?

Had I not learnt my loss before he  
came?

Could that be more because he came my  
way?

Why should he not come my way if he  
would?

And yet to-night, to-night—when all my  
wealth

Flash'd from me in a moment and I fell  
Beggar'd for ever—why *should* he come  
my way

Robed in those robes of light I must not  
wear,

With that great crown of beams about  
his brows—

Come like an angel to a damned soul,  
To tell him of the bliss he had with  
God—

Come like a careless and a greedy heir  
That scarce can wait the reading of the  
will

Before he takes possession? Was mine  
a mood

To be invaded rudely, and not rather  
A sacred, secret, unapproached woe,  
Unspeakable? I was shut up with Grief;  
She took the body of my past delight,  
Narded and swathed and balm'd it for  
herself,

And laid it in a sepulchre of rock  
Never to rise again. I was led mute

Into her temple like a sacrifice;  
I was the High Priest in her holiest  
place,

Not to be loudly broken in upon.

Oh friend, thoughts deep and heavy as  
these wellnigh

O'erbore the limits of my brain: but he  
Bent o'er me, and my neck his arm up-  
stay'd.

I thought it was an adder's fold, and once  
I strove to disengage myself, but fail'd,  
Being so feeble: she bent above me, too;  
Wan was her cheek; for whatsoever of  
blight

Lives in the dewy touch of pity had made  
The red rose there a pale one—and her  
eyes—

I saw the moonlight glitter on their  
tears—

And some few drops of that distressful  
rain

Fell on my face, and her long ringlets  
moved,

Drooping and beaten by the breeze, and  
brush'd

My fallen forehead in their to and fro,  
For in the sudden anguish of her heart

Loosed from their simple thrall they had  
 flow'd abroad,  
 And floated on and parted round her  
 neck,  
 Mantling her form halfway. She, when  
 I woke,  
 Something she ask'd, I know not what,  
 and ask'd,  
 Unanswer'd, since I spake not; for the  
 sound  
 Of that dear voice so musically low,  
 And now first heard with any sense of  
 pain,  
 As it had taken life away before,  
 Choked all the syllables, that strove to  
 rise  
 From my full heart.

The blissful lover, too,  
 From his great hoard of happiness dis-  
 till'd  
 Some drops of solace; like a vain rich  
 man,  
 That, having always prosper'd in the  
 world,  
 Folding his hands, deals comfortable  
 words  
 To hearts wounded for ever; yet, in  
 truth,  
 Fair speech was his and delicate of  
 phrase,  
 Falling in whispers on the sense, ad-  
 dress'd  
 More to the inward than the outward  
 ear,  
 As rain of the midsummer midnight soft,  
 Scarce-heard, recalling fragrance and the  
 green  
 Of the dead spring: but mine was wholly  
 dead,  
 No bud, no leaf, no flower, no fruit for  
 me.  
 Yet who had done, or who had suffer'd  
 wrong?  
 And why was I to darken their pure  
 love,  
 If, as I found, they two did love each  
 other,  
 Because my own was darken'd? Why  
 was I  
 To cross between their happy star and  
 them?  
 To stand a shadow by their shining doors,

And vex them with my darkness? Did  
 I love her?  
 Ye know that I did love her; to this  
 present  
 My full-orb'd love has waned not. Did  
 I love her,  
 And could I look upon her tearful eyes?  
 What had *she* done to weep? Why  
 should *she* weep?  
 O innocent of spirit—let my heart  
 Break rather—whom the gentlest airs  
 of Heaven  
 Should kiss with an unwonted gentleness.  
 Her love did murder mine? What then?  
 She deem'd  
 I wore a brother's mind: she call'd me  
 brother:  
 She told me all her love: she shall not  
 weep.

The brightness of a burning thought,  
 awhile  
 In battle with the glooms of my dark  
 will,  
 Moonlike emerged, and to itself lit up  
 There on the depth of an unfathom'd  
 woe  
 Reflex of action. Starting up at once,  
 As from a dismal dream of my own  
 death,  
 I, for I loved her, lost my love in Love;  
 I, for I loved her, graspt the hand she  
 lov'd,  
 And laid it in her own, and sent my cry  
 Thro' the blank night to Him who loving  
 made  
 The happy and the unhappy love, that  
 He  
 Would hold the hand of blessing over  
 them,  
 Lionel, the happy, and her, and her, his  
 bride!  
 Let them so love that men and boys may  
 say,  
 'Lo! how they love each other!' till  
 their love  
 Shall ripen to a proverb, unto all  
 Known, when their faces are forgot in  
 the land—  
 One golden dream of love, from which  
 may death  
 Awake them with heaven's music in a  
 life



More living to some happier happiness,  
Swallowing its precedent in victory.  
And as for me, Camilla, as for me, —  
The dew of tears is an unwholesome dew,  
They will but sicken the sick plant the  
more.

Deem that I love thee but as brothers do,  
So shalt thou love me still as sisters do;  
Or if thou dream aught farther, dream  
but how  
I could have loved thee, had there been  
none else  
To love as lovers, loved again by thee.

Or this, or somewhat like to this, I  
spake,  
When I beheld her weep so ruefully;  
For sure my love should ne'er indue the  
front  
And mask of Hate, who lives on others'  
moans.  
Shall Love pledge Hatred in her bitter  
draughts,  
And batten on her poisons? Love for-  
bid!  
Love passeth not the threshold of cold  
Hate,  
And Hate is strange beneath the roof  
of Love.  
O Love, if thou be'st Love, dry up these  
tears  
Shed for the love of Love; for tho' mine  
image,  
The subject of thy power, be cold in  
her,  
Yet, like cold snow, it melteth in the  
source  
Of these sad tears, and feeds their down-  
ward flow.  
So Love, arraign'd to judgment and to  
death,  
Received unto himself a part of blame,  
Being guiltless, as an innocent prisoner,  
Who, when the woful sentence hath  
been past,  
And all the clearness of his fame hath  
gone  
Beneath the shadow of the curse of man,  
First falls asleep in swoon, wherefrom  
awaked,  
And looking round upon his tearful  
friends,  
Forthwith and in his agony conceives

A shameful sense as of a cleaving  
crime —  
For whence without some guilt should  
such grief be?

So died that hour, and fell into the  
abysm  
Of forms outworn, but not to me out-  
worn,  
Who never hail'd another — was there  
one?  
There might be one — one other, worth  
the life  
That made it sensible. So that hour died  
Like odour rapt into the winged wind  
Borne into alien lands and far away.

There be some hearts so airily built,  
that they,  
They — when their love is wreck'd — if  
Love can wreck —  
On that sharp ridge of utmost doom ride  
highly  
Above the perilous seas of Change and  
Chance;  
Nay, more, hold out the lights of cheer-  
fulness;  
As the tall ship, that many a dreary year  
Knit to some dismal sandbank far at  
sea,  
All thro' the livelong hours of utter  
dark,  
Showers slanting light upon the dolorous  
wave.  
For me — what light, what gleam on  
those black ways  
Where Love could walk with banish'd  
Hope no more?

It was ill-done to part you, Sisters  
fair;  
Love's arms were wreath'd about the neck  
of Hope,  
And Hope kiss'd Love, and Love drew in  
her breath  
In that close kiss, and drank her whis-  
per'd tales.  
They said that Love would die when  
Hope was gone,  
And Love mourn'd long, and sorrow'd  
after Hope;  
At last she sought out Memory, and they  
trod

The same old paths where Love had  
walk'd with Hope,  
And Memory fed the soul of Love with  
tears.

## II.

FROM that time forth I would not see her  
more;

But many weary moons I lived alone —  
Alone, and in the heart of the great  
forest.

Sometimes upon the hills beside the sea  
All day I watch'd the floating isles of  
shade,

And sometimes on the shore, upon the  
sands

Insensibly I drew her name, until  
The meaning of the letters shot into  
My brain; anon the wanton billow wash'd  
Them over, till they faded like my love.

The hollow caverns heard me — the black  
brooks

Of the mid-forest heard me — the soft  
winds,

Laden with thistledown and seeds of  
flowers,

Paused in their course to hear me, for my  
voice

Was all of thee: the merry linnet knew  
me,

The squirrel knew me, and the dragonfly  
Shot by me like a flash of purple fire.

The rough brier tore my bleeding palms;  
the hemlock,

Brow-high, did strike my forehead as I  
past;

Yet trod I not the wildflower in my path,  
Nor bruised the wildbird's egg.

Was this the end?

Why grew we then together in one plot?  
Why fed we from one fountain? drew one  
sun?

Why were our mothers' branches of one  
stem?

Why were we one in all things, save in  
that

Where to have been one had been the  
cope and crown

Of all I hoped and fear'd? — if that same  
nearness

Were father to this distance, and that *one*  
Yauntcourier to this *double*? if Affection

Living slew Love, and Sympathy hew'd out  
The bosom-sepulchre of Sympathy?

Chiefly I sought the cavern and the  
hill

Where last we roam'd together, for the  
sound

Of the loud stream was pleasant, and the  
wind

Came wooingly with woodbine smells.  
Sometimes

All day I sat within the cavern-mouth,  
Fixing my eyes on those three cypress-  
cones

That spired above the wood; and with  
mad hand

Tearing the bright leaves of the ivy-  
screen,

I cast them in the noisy brook beneath,  
And watch'd them till they vanish'd from  
my sight

Beneath the bower of wreathed eglan-  
tines:

And all the fragments of the living rock  
(Huge blocks, which some old trembling  
of the world

Had loosen'd from the mountain, till they  
fell

Half-digging their own graves) these in  
my agony

Did I make bare of all the golden moss,  
Wherewith the dashing runnel in the  
spring

Had liveried them all over. In my brain  
The spirit seem'd to flag from thought to  
thought,

As moonlight wandering thro' a mist:  
my blood

Crept like marsh drains thro' all my lan-  
guid limbs;

The motions of my heart seem'd far within  
me,

Unfrequent, low, as tho' it told its pulses;  
And yet it shook me, that my frame would  
shudder,

As if 'twere drawn asunder by the rack.  
But over the deep graves of Hope and  
Fear,

And all the broken palaces of the Past,  
Brooded one master-passion evermore,  
Like to a low-hung and a fiery sky  
Above some fair metropolis, earth-  
shock'd, —

Hung round with ragged rims and burn-  
ing folds, —  
Embathing all with wild and woful hues,  
Great hills of ruins, and collapsed masses  
Of thundershaken columns indistinct,  
And fused together in the tyrannous  
light —  
Ruins, the ruin of all my life and me!

Sometimes I thought Camilla was no  
more,  
Some one had told me she was dead, and  
ask'd  
If I would see her burial: then I seem'd  
To rise, and through the forest-shadow  
borne  
With more than mortal swiftmess, I ran  
down  
The steepy sea-bank, till I came upon  
The rear of a procession, curving round  
The silver-sheeted bay: in front of which  
Six stately virgins, all in white, upbare  
A broad earth-sweeping pall of whitest  
lawn,  
Wreathed round the bier with garlands:  
in the distance,  
From out the yellow woods upon the hill  
Look'd forth the summit and the pinna-  
cles  
Of a gray steeple — thence at intervals  
A low bell tolling. All the pageantry,  
Save those six virgins which upheld the  
bier,  
Were stoled from head to foot in flowing  
black;  
One walk'd abreast with me, and veil'd  
his brow,  
And he was loud in weeping and in praise  
Of her, we follow'd: a strong sympathy  
Shook all my soul: I flung myself upon  
him  
In tears and cries: I told him all my love,  
How I had loved her from the first;  
whereat  
He shrank and howl'd, and from his brow  
drew back  
His hand to push me from him; and the  
face,  
The very face and form of Lionel  
Flash'd thro' my eyes into my innermost  
brain,  
And at his feet I seem'd to faint and fall,  
To fall and die away. I could not rise

Albeit I strove to follow. They past on,  
The lordly Phantasms! in their floating  
folds  
They past and were no more: but I had  
fallen  
Prone by the dashing runnel on the grass.

Always the inaudible invisible thought,  
Artificer and subject, lord and slave,  
Shaped by the audible and visible,  
Moulded the audible and visible;  
All crisped sounds of wave and leaf and  
wind,  
Flatter'd the fancy of my fading brain;  
The cloud-pavilion'd element, the wood,  
The mountain, the three cypresses, the  
cave,  
Storm, sunset, glows and glories of the  
moon  
Below black firs, when silent-creeping  
winds  
Laid the long night in silver streaks and  
bars,  
Were wrought into the tissue of my  
dream:  
The moanings in the forest, the loud  
brook,  
Cries of the partridge like a rusty key  
Turn'd in a lock, owl-whoop and dor-  
hawk-whirr  
Awoke me not, but were a part of sleep,  
And voices in the distance calling to me  
And in my vision bidding me dream on,  
Like sounds without the twilight realm  
of dreams,  
Which wander round the bases of the  
hills,  
And murmur at the low-dropt eaves of  
sleep,  
Half-entering the portals. Oftentimes  
The vision had fair prelude, in the end  
Opening on darkness, stately vestibules  
To caves and shows of Death: whether  
the mind,  
With some revenge, — even to itself un-  
known, —  
Made strange division of its suffering  
With her, whom to have suffering view'd  
had been  
Extremest pain; or that the clear-eyed  
Spirit,  
Being blunted in the Present, grew at  
length

Prophetical and prescient of whate'er  
The Future had in store: or that which  
most

Enchains belief, the sorrow of my spirit  
Was of so wide a compass it took in  
All I had loved, and my dull agony,  
Ideally to her transferr'd, became  
Anguish intolerable.

The day waned;

Alone I sat with her: about my brow  
Her warm breath floated in the utterance  
Of silver-chorded tones: her lips were  
sunder'd

With smiles of tranquil bliss, which broke  
in light

Like morning from her eyes — her elo-  
quent eyes,

(As I have seen them many a hundred  
times)

Fill'd all with pure clear fire, thro' mine  
down rain'd

Their spirit-searching splendours. As a  
vision

Unto a haggard prisoner, iron-stay'd  
In damp and dismal dungeons under-  
ground,

Confined on points of faith, when strength  
is shock'd

With torment, and expectancy of worse  
Upon the morrow, thro' the ragged walls,  
All unawares before his half-shut eyes,  
Comes in upon him in the dead of night,  
And with the excess of sweetness and of  
awe,

Makes the heart tremble, and the sight  
run over

Upon his steely gyves; so those fair eyes  
Shone on my darkness, forms which ever  
stood

Within the magic cirque of memory,  
Invisible but deathless, waiting still  
The edict of the will to reassume  
The semblance of those rare realities  
Of which they were the mirrors. Now  
the light

Which was their life, burst through the  
cloud of thought

Keen, irrepressible.

It was a room

Within the summer-house of which I  
spake,

Hung round with paintings of the sea,  
and one

A vessel in mid-ocean, her heaved prow  
Clambering, the mast bent and the ravin  
wind

In her sail roaring. From the outer day,  
Betwixt the close-set ivies came a broad  
And solid beam of isolated light,  
Crowded with driving atomies, and fell  
Slanting upon that picture, from prime  
youth

Well-known well-loved. She drew it  
long ago

Forthgazing on the waste and open sea,  
One morning when the upblown billow  
ran

Shoreward beneath red clouds, and I had  
pour'd

Into the shadowing pencil's naked forms  
Colour and life: it was a bond and seal  
Of friendship, spoken of with tearful  
smiles;

A monument of childhood and of love;  
The poesy of childhood; my lost love  
Symbol'd in storm. We gazed on it  
together

In mute and glad remembrance, and  
each heart

Grew closer to the other, and the eye  
Was riveted and charm-bound, gazing  
like

The Indian on a still-eyed snake, low-  
couch'd —

A beauty which is death; when all at  
once

That painted vessel, as with inner life,  
Began to heave upon that painted sea;  
An earthquake, my loud heart-beats,  
made the ground

Reel under us, and all at once, soul, life  
And breath and motion, past and flow'd  
away

To those unreal billows: round and  
round

A whirlwind caught and bore us; mighty  
gyres

Rapid and vast, of hissing spray wind-  
driven

Far thro' the dizzy dark. Aloud she  
shrieked;

My heart was cloven with pain; I wound  
my arms

About her: we whirl'd giddily; the wind

Sung; but I clasp'd her without fear:  
 her weight  
 Shrank in my grasp, and over my dim  
 eyes,  
 And parted lips which drank her breath,  
 down-hung  
 The jaws of Death: I, groaning, from  
 me flung  
 Her empty phantom: all the sway and  
 whirl  
 Of the storm dropt to windless calm, and I  
 Down welter'd thro' the dark ever and  
 ever.

## III.

I CAME one day and sat among the  
 stones  
 Strewn in the entry of the moaning cave;  
 A morning air, sweet after rain, ran over  
 The rippling levels of the lake, and blew  
 Coolness and moisture and all smells of  
 bud  
 And foliage from the dark and dripping  
 woods  
 Upon my fever'd brows that shook and  
 throbb'd  
 From temple unto temple. To what  
 height  
 The day had grown I know not. Then  
 came on me  
 The hollow tolling of the bell, and all  
 The vision of the bier. As heretofore  
 I walk'd behind with one who veil'd his  
 brow.  
 Methought by slow degrees the sullen  
 bell  
 Toll'd quicker, and the breakers on the  
 shore  
 Sloped into louder surf: those that went  
 with me,  
 And those that held the bier before my  
 face,  
 Moved with one spirit round about the  
 bay,  
 Trod swifter steps; and while I walk'd  
 with these  
 In marvel at that gradual change, I  
 thought  
 Four bells instead of one began to ring,  
 Four merry bells, four merry marriage-  
 bells,  
 In clanging cadence jangling peal on  
 peal—

A long loud clash of rapid marriage-  
 bells,  
 Then those who led the van, and those  
 in rear,  
 Rush'd into dance, and like wild Bac-  
 chanals  
 Fled onward to the steeple in the woods:  
 I, too, was borne along and felt the blast  
 Beat on my heated eyelids: all at once  
 The front rank made a sudden halt; the  
 bells  
 Lapsed into frightful stillness; the surge  
 fell  
 From thunder into whispers; those six  
 maids  
 With shrieks and ringing laughter on the  
 sand  
 Threw down the bier; the woods upon  
 the hill  
 Waved with a sudden gust that sweeping  
 down  
 Took the edges of the pall, and blew it far  
 Until it hung, a little silver cloud  
 Over the sounding seas: I turn'd: my  
 heart  
 Shrank in me, like a snowflake in the  
 hand,  
 Waiting to see the settled countenance  
 Of her I loved, adorn'd with fading  
 flowers.  
 But she from out her death-like chrysalis,  
 She from her bier, as into fresher life,  
 My sister, and my cousin, and my love,  
 Leapt lightly clad in bridal white— her  
 hair  
 Studded with one rich Provence rose—  
 a light  
 Of smiling welcome round her lips— her  
 eyes  
 And cheeks as bright as when she climb'd  
 the hill.  
 One hand she reach'd to those that came  
 behind,  
 And while I mused nor yet endured to  
 take  
 So rich a prize, the man who stood with  
 me  
 Stept gaily forward, throwing down his  
 robes,  
 And claspt her hand in his: again the  
 bells  
 Jangled and clang'd: again the stormy  
 surf

Crash'd in the shingle: and the whirling  
 rout  
 Led by those two rush'd into dance, and  
 fled  
 Wind-footed to the steeple in the woods,  
 Till they were swallow'd in the leafy  
 bowers,  
 And I stood sole beside the vacant bier.  
 There, there, my latest vision — then the  
 event!

## IV.

THE GOLDEN SUPPER.<sup>1</sup>

(Another speaks.)

HE flies the event: he leaves the event  
 to me:  
 Poor Julian — how he rush'd away; the  
 bells,  
 Those marriage-bells, echoing in ear and  
 heart —  
 But cast a parting glance at me, you saw,  
 As who should say, 'Continuc.' Well  
 he had  
 One golden hour — of triumph shall I  
 say?  
 Solace at least — before he left his home.

Would you had seen him in that hour  
 of his!  
 He moved thro' all of it majestically —  
 Restrain'd himself quite to the close —  
 but now —

Whether they *were* his lady's marriage-  
 bells,  
 Or prophets of them in his fantasy,  
 I never ask'd: but Lionel and the girl  
 Were wedded, and our Julian came again  
 back to his mother's house among the  
 pines.  
 But these, their gloom, the mountains  
 and the Bay,  
 The whole land weigh'd him down as  
 Ætna does  
 The Giant of Mythology: he would go,  
 Would leave the land for ever, and had  
 gone

<sup>1</sup> This poem is founded upon a story in Boccaccio. See Introduction, p. 467.

Surely, but for a whisper, 'Go not yet,'  
 Some warning — sent divinely — as it  
 seem'd  
 By that which follow'd — but of this I  
 deem  
 As of the visions that he told — the event  
 Glanced back upon them in his after  
 life,  
 And partly made them — tho' he knew it  
 not.

And thus he stay'd and would not look  
 at her —  
 No not for months: but, when the  
 eleventh moon  
 After their marriage lit the lover's Bay,  
 Heard yet once more the tolling bell, and  
 said,  
 Would you could toll me out of life, but  
 found —  
 All softly as his mother broke it to him —  
 A crueller reason than a crazy ear,  
 For that low knell tolling his lady dead —  
 Dead — and had lain three days without  
 a pulse:  
 All that look'd on her had pronounced  
 her dead.  
 And so they bore her (for in Julian's  
 land  
 They never nail a dumb head up in  
 elm),  
 Bore her free-faced to the free airs of  
 heaven,  
 And laid her in the vault of her own  
 kin.

What did he then? not die: he is here  
 and hale —  
 Not plunge headforemost from the moun-  
 tain there,  
 And leave the name of Lover's Leap:  
 not he:  
 He knew the meaning of the whisper  
 now,  
 Thought that he knew it. 'This, I  
 stay'd for this;  
 O love, I have not seen you for so long.  
 Now, now, will I go down into the grave,  
 I will be all alone with all I love,  
 And kiss her on the lips. She is his no  
 more:  
 The dead returns to me, and I go down  
 To kiss the dead.'



The fancy stirr'd him so  
He rose and went, and entering the dim  
vault,

And, making there a sudden light, beheld  
All round about him that which all will  
be.

The light was but a flash, and went again.  
Then at the far end of the vault he saw  
His lady with the moonlight on her face;  
Her breast as in a shadow-prison, bars  
Of black and bands of silver, which the  
moon

Struck from an open grating overhead  
High in the wall, and all the rest of her  
Drown'd in the gloom and horror of the  
vault.

'It was my wish,' he said, 'to pass, to  
sleep,  
To rest, to be with her—till the great  
day  
Peal'd on us with that music which rights  
all,  
And raised us hand in hand.' And  
kneeling there  
Down in the dreadful dust that once was  
man,  
Dust, as he said, that once was loving  
hearts,  
Hearts that had beat with such a love as  
mine—  
Not such as mine, no, nor for such as  
her—

He softly put his arm about her neck  
And kiss'd her more than once, till help-  
less death  
And silence made him bold—nay, but I  
wrong him,  
He revered his dear lady even in  
death;  
But, placing his true hand upon her  
heart,  
'O, you warm heart,' he moan'd, 'not  
even death  
Can chill you all at once:' then starting,  
thought

His dreams had come again. 'Do I  
wake or sleep?  
Or am I made immortal, or my love  
Mortal once more?' It beat—the heart  
—it beat:

Faint—but it beat: at which his own  
began

To pulse with such a vehemence that it  
drown'd

The feebler motion underneath his hand.  
But when at last his doubts were satisfied,  
He raised her softly from the sepulchre,  
And, wrapping her all over with the cloak  
He came in, and now striding fast, and  
now

Sitting awhile to rest, but evermore  
Holding his golden burthen in his arms,  
So bore her thro' the solitary land  
Back to the mother's house where she  
was born.

There the good mother's kindly minis-  
tering,

With half a night's appliances, recall'd  
Her fluttering life: she raised an eye that  
ask'd

'Where?' till the things familiar to her  
youth

Had made a silent answer: then she spoke  
'Here! and how came I here?' and  
learning it

(They told her somewhat rashly as I  
think)

At once began to wander and to wail,  
'Ay, but you know that you must give  
me back:

Send! bid him come;' but Lionel was  
away—

Stung by his loss had vanish'd, none  
knew where.

'He casts me out,' she wept, 'and goes'  
—a wail

That seeming something, yet was nothing,  
born

Not from believing mind, but shatter'd  
nerve,

Yet haunting Julian, as her own reproof  
At some precipitance in her burial.

Then, when her own true spirit had  
return'd,

'Oh yes, and you,' she said, 'and none  
but you?

For you have given me life and love  
again,

And none but you yourself shall tell him  
of it,

And you shall give me back when he  
returns.'

'Stay then a little,' answer'd Julian,  
'here,

And keep yourself, none knowing, to  
yourself;  
And I will do your will. I may not stay,  
No, not an hour; but send me notice of  
him  
When he returns, and then will I return,  
And I will make a solemn offering of you  
To him you love.' And faintly she  
replied,  
'And I will do *your* will, and none shall  
know.'

Not know? with such a secret to be  
known.  
But all their house was old and loved  
them both,  
And all the house had known the loves  
of both;  
Had died almost to serve them any way,  
And all the land was waste and solitary:  
And then he rode away; but after this,  
An hour or two, Camilla's travail came  
Upon her, and that day a boy was born,  
Heir of his face and land, to Lionel.

And thus our lonely lover rode away,  
And pausing at a hostel in a marsh,  
There fever seized upon him: myself was  
then  
Travelling that land, and meant to rest  
an hour;  
And sitting down to such a base repast,  
It makes me angry yet to speak of it —  
I heard a groaning overhead, and climb'd  
The moulder'd stairs (for everything was  
vile)  
And in a loft, with none to wait on him,  
Found, as it seem'd, a skeleton alone,  
Raving of dead men's dust and beating  
hearts.

A dismal hostel in a dismal land,  
A flat malarian world of reed and rush!  
But there from fever and my care of  
him  
Sprang up a friendship that may help us  
yet.  
For while we roam'd along the dreary  
coast,  
And waited for her message, piece by  
piece  
I learnt the drearier story of his life;  
And, tho' he loved and honour'd Lionel,

Found that the sudden wail his lady  
made  
Dwelt in his fancy: did he know her  
worth,  
Her beauty even? should he not be  
taught,  
Ev'n by the price that others set upon it,  
The value of that jewel he had to guard?

Suddenly came her notice and we part,  
I with our lover to his native Bay.

This love is of the brain, the mind, the  
soul:  
*That* makes the sequel pure; tho' some  
of us  
Beginning at the sequel know no more.  
Not such am I: and yet I say the bird  
That will not hear my call, however  
sweet,  
But if my neighbour whistle answers  
him —  
What matter? there are others in the  
wood.  
Yet when I saw her (and I thought him  
crazed,  
Tho' not with such a craziness as needs  
A cell and keeper), those dark eyes of  
hers —  
Oh! such dark eyes! and not her eyes  
alone,  
But all from these to where she touch'd  
on earth,  
For such a craziness as Julian's look'd  
No less than one divine apology.

So sweetly and so modestly she came  
To greet us, her young hero in her arms!  
'Kiss him,' she said. 'You gave me life  
again.  
He, but for you, had never seen it once.  
His other father you! Kiss him, and  
then  
Forgive him, if his name be Julian too.'

Talk of lost hopes and broken heart!  
his own  
Sent such a flame into his face, I knew  
Some sudden vivid pleasure hit him  
there.

But he was all the more resolved to go,  
And sent at once to Lionel, praying him

By that great love they both had borne  
 the dead,  
 To come and revel for one hour with him  
 Before he left the land for evermore;  
 And then to friends—they were not  
 many—who lived  
 Scatteringly about that lonely land of  
 his,  
 And bade them to a banquet of farewells.

And Julian made a solemn feast: I  
 never  
 Sat at a costlier; for all round his hall  
 From column on to column, as in a  
 wood,  
 Not such as here—an equatorial one,  
 Great garlands swung and blossom'd;  
 and beneath,  
 Heirlooms, and ancient miracles of Art,  
 Chalice and salver, wines that, Heaven  
 knows when,  
 Had suck'd the fire of some forgotten  
 sun,  
 And kept it thro' a hundred years of  
 gloom,  
 Yet glowing in a heart of ruby—cups  
 Where nymph and god ran ever round in  
 gold—  
 Others of glass as costly—some with  
 gems  
 Movable and resettable at will,  
 And trebling all the rest in value—Ah  
 heavens!  
 Why need I tell you all?—suffice to say  
 That whatsoever such a house as his,  
 And his was old, has in it rare or fair  
 Was brought before the guest: and they,  
 the guests,  
 Wonder'd at some strange light in Julian's  
 eyes  
 (I told you that he had his golden hour),  
 And such a feast, ill-suited as it seem'd  
 To such a time, to Lionel's loss and his  
 And that resolved self-exile from a land  
 He never would revisit, such a feast  
 So rich, so strange, and stranger ev'n  
 than rich,  
 But rich as for the nuptials of a king.

And stranger yet, at one end of the  
 hall  
 Two great funereal curtains, looping  
 down,

Parted a little ere they met the floor,  
 About a picture of his lady, taken  
 Some years before, and falling hid the  
 frame.

And just above the parting was a lamp:  
 So the sweet figure folded round with  
 night  
 Seem'd stepping out of darkness with a  
 smile.

Well then—our solemn feast—we ate  
 and drank,  
 And might—the wines being of such  
 nobleness—

Have jested also, but for Julian's eyes,  
 And something weird and wild about it  
 all:

What was it? for our lover seldom spoke,  
 Scarce touch'd the meats; but ever and  
 anon

A priceless goblet with a priceless wine  
 Arising, show'd be drank beyond his use;  
 And when the feast was near an end, he  
 said:

'There is a custom in the Orient,  
 friends—

I read of it in Persia—when a man  
 Will honour those who feast with him,  
 he brings

And shows them whatsoever he accounts  
 Of all his treasures the most beautiful,  
 Gold, jewels, arms, whatever it may be.  
 This custom—'

Pausing here a moment, all  
 The guests broke in upon him with  
 meeting hands

And cries about the banquet—'Beautiful!  
 Who could desire more beauty at a feast?'

The lover answer'd, 'There is more  
 than one

Here sitting who desires it. Laud me not  
 Before my time, but hear me to the close.  
 This custom steps yet further when the  
 guest

Is loved and honour'd to the uttermost.  
 For after he hath shown him gems or  
 gold,

He brings and sets before him in rich  
 guise

That which is thrice as beautiful as these,

The beauty that is dearest to his heart —  
 "O my heart's lord, would I could show  
 you," he says,  
 "Ev'n my heart too." And I propose  
 to-night  
 To show you what is dearest to my heart,  
 And my heart too.

‘But solve me first a doubt.  
 I knew a man, nor many years ago;  
 He had a faithful servant, one who loved  
 His master more than all on earth beside.  
 He falling sick, and seeming close on  
 death,  
 His master would not wait until he died,  
 But bade his menials bear him from the  
 door,  
 And leave him in the public way to die.  
 I knew another, not so long ago,  
 Who found the dying servant, took him  
 home,  
 And fed, and cherish'd him, and saved  
 his life.  
 I ask you now, should this first master  
 claim  
 His service, whom does it belong to? him  
 Who thrust him out, or him who saved  
 his life?’

This question, so flung down before  
 the guests,  
 And balanced either way by each, at  
 length  
 When some were doubtful how the law  
 would hold,  
 Was handed over by consent of all  
 To one who had not spoken, Lionel.

Fair speech was his, and delicate of  
 phrase.  
 And he beginning languidly — his loss  
 Weigh'd on him yet — but warming as he  
 went,  
 Glanced at the point of law, to pass it by,  
 Affirming that as long as either lived,  
 By all the laws of love and gratefulness,  
 The service of the one so saved was due  
 All to the saver — adding, with a smile,  
 The first for many weeks — a semi-smile  
 As at a strong conclusion — ‘body and  
 soul  
 And life and limbs, all his to work his  
 will.’

Then Julian made a secret sign to me  
 To bring Camilla down before them all.  
 And crossing her own picture as she came,  
 And looking as much lovelier as herself  
 Is lovelier than all others — on her head  
 A diamond circlet, and from under this  
 A veil, that seemed no more than gilded  
 air,

Flying by each fine ear, an Eastern gauze  
 With seeds of gold — so, with that grace  
 of hers,  
 Slow-moving as a wave against the wind,  
 That flings a mist behind it in the sun —  
 And bearing high in arms the mighty  
 babe,

The younger Julian, who himself was  
 crown'd  
 With roses, none so rosy as himself —  
 And over all her babe and her the jewels  
 Of many generations of his house  
 Sparkled and flash'd, for he had decked  
 them out

As for a solemn sacrifice of love —  
 So she came in: — I am long in telling it,  
 I never yet beheld a thing so strange,  
 Sad, sweet, and strange together — floated  
 in —

While all the guests in mute amazement  
 rose —

And slowly pacing to the middle hall,  
 Before the board, there paused and stood,  
 her breast

Hard-heaving, and her eyes upon her feet,  
 Not daring yet to glance at Lionel.  
 But him she carried, him nor lights nor  
 feast

Dazed or amazed, nor eyes of men; who  
 cared

Only to use his own, and staring wide  
 And hungering for the gilt and jewell'd  
 world

About him, look'd, as he is like to prove,  
 When Julian goes, the lord of all he saw.

‘My guests,’ said Julian: ‘you are  
 honour'd now

Ev'n to the uttermost: in her behold  
 Of all my treasures the most beautiful,  
 Of all things upon earth the dearest to  
 me.’

Then waving us a sign to seat ourselves,  
 Led his dear lady to a chair of state.  
 And I, by Lionel sitting, saw his face

Fire, and dead ashes and all fire again  
Thrice in a second, felt him tremble too,  
And heard him muttering, 'So like, so  
like;

She never had a sister. I knew none.  
Some cousin of his and hers — O God, so  
like!'

And then he suddenly ask'd her if she  
were.

She shook, and cast her eyes down, and  
was dumb.

And then some other question'd if she  
came

From foreign lands, and still she did not  
speak.

Another, if the boy were hers: but she  
To all their queries answer'd not a word,  
Which made the amazement more, till  
one of them

Said, shuddering, 'Her spectre!' But  
his friend

Replied, in half a whisper, 'Not at least  
The spectre that will speak if spoken to.  
Terrible pity, if one so beautiful  
Prove, as I almost dread to find her,  
dumb!'

But Julian, sitting by her, answer'd all:  
'She is but dumb, because in her you  
see

That faithful servant whom we spoke  
about,

Obedient to her second master now;  
Which will not last. I have here to-night  
a guest

So bound to me by common love and  
loss —

What! shall I bind him more? in his  
behalf,

Shall I exceed the Persian, giving him  
That which of all things is the dearest to  
me,

Not only showing? and he himself pro-  
nounced

That my rich gift is wholly mine to give.

'Now all be dumb, and promise all of  
you

Not to break in on what I say by word  
Or whisper, while I show you all my  
heart.'

And then began the story of his love  
As here to-day, but not so wordily —

The passionate moment would not suffer  
that —

Past thro' his visions to the burial; thence  
Down to this last strange hour in his own  
hall;

And then rose up, and with him all his  
guests

Once more as by enchantment; all but he,  
Lionel, who fain had risen, but fell again,  
And sat as if in chains — to whom he said:

'Take my free gift, my cousin, for  
your wife;

And were it only for the giver's sake,  
And tho' she seem so like the one you lost,  
Yet cast her not away so suddenly,  
Lest there be none left here to bring her  
back:

I leave this land for ever.' Here he  
ceased.

Then taking his dear lady by one  
hand,

And bearing on one arm the noble babe,  
He slowly brought them both to Lionel.  
And there the widower husband and dead  
wife

Rush'd each at each with a cry, that rather  
seem'd

For some new death than for a life re-  
new'd;

Whereat the very babe began to wail;  
At once they turn'd, and caught and  
brought him in

To their charm'd circle, and, half killing  
him

With kisses, round him closed and claspt  
again.

But Lionel, when, at last he freed himself  
From wife and child, and lifted up a face  
All over glowing with the sun of life,  
And love, and boundless thanks — the  
sight of this

So frightened our good friend, that turning  
to me

And saying, 'It is over: let us go' —  
There were our horses ready at the  
doors —

We bade them no farewell, but mounting  
these

He past for ever from his native land;  
And I with him, my Julian, back to  
mine.

## TO ALFRED TENNYSON

MY GRANDSON.

GOLDEN-HAIR'D Ally whose name is one with mine,  
 Crazy with laughter and babble and earth's new wine,  
 Now that the flower of a year and a half is thine,  
 O little blossom, O mine, and mine of mine,  
 Glorious poet who never hast written a line,  
 Laugh, for the name at the head of my verse is thine.  
 May'st thou never be wrong'd by the name that is mine!

## THE FIRST QUARREL.

(IN THE ISLE OF WIGHT.)

## I.

'WAIT a little,' you say, 'you are sure it'll all come right,'  
 But the boy was born i' trouble, an' looks so wan an' so white:  
 Wait! an' once I ha' waited — I hadn't to wait for long.  
 Now I wait, wait, wait for Harry. — No, no, you are doing me wrong!  
 Harry and I were married: the boy can hold up his head,  
 The boy was born in wedlock, but after my man was dead;  
 I ha' work'd for him fifteen years, an' I work an' I wait to the end.  
 I am all alone in the world, an' you are my only friend.

## II.

Doctor, if *you* can wait, I'll tell you the tale o' my life.  
 When Harry an' I were children, he call'd me his own little wife;  
 I was happy when I was with him, an' sorry when he was away,  
 An' when we play'd together, I loved him better than play;  
 He workt me the daisy chain — he made me the cowslip ball,  
 He fought the boys that were rude, an' I loved him better than all.  
 Passionate girl tho' I was, an' often at home in disgrace,  
 I never could quarrel with Harry — I had but to look in his face.

## III.

There was a farmer in Dorset of Harry's kin, that had need  
 Of a good stout lad at his farm; he sent, an' the father agreed;  
 So Harry was bound to the Dorsetshire farm for years an' for years;  
 I walked with him down to the quay, poor lad, an' we parted in tears.  
 The boat was beginning to move, we heard them a-ringing the bell,  
 'I'll never love any but you, God bless you, my own little Nell.'

## IV.

I was a child, an' he was a child, an' he came to harm;  
 There was a girl, a hussy, that workt with him up at the farm,  
 One had deceived her an' left her alone with her sin an' her shame,  
 An' so she was wicked with Harry; the girl was the most to blame.

## V.

An' years went over till I that was little had grown so tall,  
 The men would say of the maids, 'Our Nelly's the flower of 'em all.'  
 I didn't take heed o' *them*, but I taught myself all I could  
 To make a good wife for Harry, when Harry came home for good.

## VI.

Often I seem'd unhappy, and often as happy too,  
 For I heard it abroad in the fields 'I'll never love any but you;'  
 'I'll never love any but you' the morning song of the lark,  
 'I'll never love any but you' the nightingale's hymn in the dark.

## VII.

And Harry came home at last, but he look'd at me sidelong and shy,  
 Vext me a bit, till he told me that so many years had gone by,  
 I had grown so handsome and tall — that I might ha' forgot him somehow —  
 For he thought — there were other lads — he was fear'd to look at me now.



## VIII.

Hard was the frost in the field, we were  
 married o' Christmas day,  
 Married among the red berries, an' all as  
 merry as May —  
 Those were the pleasant times, my house  
 an' my man were my pride,  
 We seem'd like ships i' the Channel  
 a-sailing with wind an' tide.

## IX.

But work was scant in the Isle, tho' he  
 tried the villages round,  
 So Harry went over the Solent to see if  
 work could be found;  
 An' he wrote 'I ha' six weeks' work,  
 little wife, so far as I know;  
 I'll come for an hour to-morrow, an' kiss  
 you before I go.'

## X.

So I set to righting the house, for wasn't  
 he coming that day?  
 An' I hit on an old deal-box that was  
 push'd in a corner away,  
 It was full of old odds an' ends, an' a  
 letter along wi' the rest,  
 I had better ha' put my naked hand in a  
 hornets' nest.

## XI.

'Sweetheart' — this was the letter — this  
 was the letter I read —  
 'You promised to find me work near you,  
 an' I wish I was dead —  
 Didn't you kiss me an' promise? you  
 haven't done it, my lad,  
 An' I almost died o' your going away,  
 an' I wish that I had.'

## XII.

I too wish that I had — in the pleasant  
 times that had past,  
 Before I quarrell'd with Harry — *my*  
 quarrel — the first an' the last.

## XIII.

For Harry came in, an' I flung him the  
 letter that drove me wild,  
 An' he told it me all at once, as simple  
 as any child,

'What can it matter, my lass, what I did  
 wi' my single life?  
 I ha' been as true to you as ever a man  
 to his wife;  
 An' *she* wasn't one o' the worst.' 'Then,'  
 I said, 'I'm none o' the best.'  
 An' he smiled at me, 'Ain't you, my  
 love? Come, come, little wife, let  
 it rest!

The man isn't like the woman, no need  
 to make such a stir.'

But he anger'd me all the more, an' I said  
 'You were keeping with her,  
 When I was a-loving you all along an'  
 the same as before.'

An' he didn't speak for a while, an' he  
 anger'd me more and more.

Then he patted my hand in his gentle  
 way, 'Let bygones be!'

'Bygones! you kept yours hush'd,' I said,  
 'when you married me!

By-gones ma' be come-agains; an' *she* —  
 in her shame an' her sin —

You'll have her to nurse my child, if I  
 die o' my lying in!

You'll make her its second mother! I  
 hate her — an' I hate you!

Ah, Harry, my man, you had better ha'  
 beaten me black an' blue

Than ha' spoken as kind as you did,  
 when I were so crazy wi' spite,

'Wait a little, my lass, I am sure it'll  
 all come right.'

## XIV.

An' he took three turns in the rain, an' I  
 watch'd him, an' when he came in  
 I felt that my heart was hard, he was all  
 wet thro' to the skin,

An' I never said 'off wi' the wet,' I never  
 said 'on wi' the dry,'

So I knew my heart was hard, when he  
 came to bid me goodbye.

'You said that you hated me, Ellen, but  
 that isn't true, you know;

I am going to leave you a bit — you'll  
 kiss me before I go?'

## XV.

'Going! you're going to her — kiss her  
 — if you will,' I said —

I was near my time wi' the boy, I must  
 ha' been light i' my head —

'I had sooner be cursed than kiss'd!' —  
I didn't know well what I meant,  
But I turn'd my face from *him*, an' he  
turned *his* face an' he went.

## XVI.

And then he sent me a letter, 'I've  
gotten my work to do;  
You wouldn't kiss me, my lass, an' I  
never loved any but you;  
I am sorry for all the quarrel an' sorry  
for what she wrote,  
I ha' six weeks' work in Jersey an' go to-  
night by the boat.'

## XVII.

An' the wind began to rise, an' I thought  
of him out at sea,  
An' I felt I had been to blame; he was  
always kind to me.  
'Wait a little, my lass, I am sure it 'ill  
all come right' —  
An' the boat went down that night —  
the boat went down that night.

## RIZPAH.

## 17—.

## I.

WAILING, wailing, wailing, the wind over  
land and sea —  
And Willy's voice in the wind, 'O mother  
come out to me.'  
Why should he call me to-night, when  
he knows that I cannot go?  
For the downs are as bright as day, and  
the full moon stares at the snow.

## II.

We should be seen, my dear; they would  
spy us out of the town.  
The loud black nights for us, and the  
storm rushing over the down,  
When I cannot see my own hand, but  
am led by the creak of the chain,  
And grovel and grope for my son till I  
find myself drenched with the  
rain.

## III.

Anything fallen again? nay — what was  
there left to fall?  
I have taken them home, I have num-  
ber'd the bones, I have hidden  
them all.  
What am I saying? and what are *you*?  
do you come as a spy?  
Falls? what falls? who knows? As the  
tree falls so must it lie.

## IV.

Who let her in? how long has she been?  
you — what have you heard?  
Why did you sit so quiet? you never have  
spoken a word.  
O — to pray with me — yes — a lady —  
none of their spies —  
But the night has crept into my heart,  
and begun to darken my eyes.

## V.

Ah — you, that have lived so soft, what  
should *you* know of the night,  
The blast and the burning shame and the  
bitter frost and the fright?  
I have done it, while you were asleep —  
you were only made for the day.  
I have gather'd my baby together — and  
now you may go your way.

## VI.

Nay — for it's kind of you, Madam, to  
sit by an old dying wife.  
But say nothing hard of my boy, I have  
only an hour of life.  
I kiss'd my boy in the prison, before he  
went out to die.  
'They dared me to do it,' he said, and he  
never has told me a lie.  
I whipt him for robbing an orchard once  
when he was but a child —  
'The farmer dared me to do it,' he said;  
he was always so wild —  
And idle — and couldn't be idle — my  
Willy — he never could rest.  
The King should have made him a sol-  
dier, he would have been one of  
his best.

## VII.

But he lived with a lot of wild mates, and  
they never would let him be good;  
They swore that he dare not rob the  
mail, and he swore that he would;  
And he took no life, but he took one  
purse, and when all was done  
He flung it among his fellows — I'll none  
of it, said my son.

## VIII.

I came into court to the Judge and the  
lawyers. I told them my tale,  
God's own truth — but they kill'd him,  
they kill'd him for robbing the  
mail.  
They hang'd him in chains for a show —  
we had always borne a good  
name —  
To be hang'd for a thief — and then put  
away — isn't that enough shame?  
Dust to dust — low down — let us hide!  
but they set him so high  
That all the ships of the world could  
stare at him, passing by.  
God 'ill pardon the hell-black raven and  
horrible fowls of the air,  
But not the black heart of the lawyer who  
kill'd him and hang'd him there.

## IX.

And the jailer forced me away. I had  
bid him my last goodbye;  
They had fasten'd the door of his cell.  
'O mother!' I heard him cry.  
I couldn't get back tho' I tried, he had  
something further to say,  
And now I never shall know it. The  
jailer forced me away.

## X.

Then since I couldn't but hear that cry  
of my boy that was dead,  
They seized me and shut me up: they  
fasten'd me down on my bed.  
'Mother, O mother!' — he call'd in the  
dark to me year after year —  
They beat me for that, they beat me —  
you know that I couldn't but hear;

And then at the last they found I had  
grown so stupid and still  
They let me abroad again — but the  
creatures had worked their will.

## XI.

Flesh of my flesh was gone, but bone of  
my bone was left —  
I stole them all from the lawyers — and  
you, will you call it a theft? —  
My baby, the bones that had suck'd me,  
the bones that had laugh'd and  
had cried —  
Theirs? O no! they are mine — not theirs  
— they had moved in my side.

## XII.

Do you think I was scared by the bones?  
I kiss'd 'em, I buried 'em all —  
I can't dig deep, I am old — in the night  
by the churchyard wall.  
My Willy 'ill rise up whole when the  
trumpet of judgment 'ill sound;  
But I charge you never to say that I laid  
him in holy ground.

## XIII.

They would scratch him up — they would  
hang him again on the cursed  
tree.  
Sin? O yes — we are sinners, I know —  
let all that be,  
And read me a Bible verse of the Lord's  
good will toward men —  
'Full of compassion and mercy, the Lord'  
— let me hear it again;  
'Full of compassion and mercy — long-  
suffering.' Yes, O yes!  
For the lawyer is born but to murder —  
the Saviour lives but to bless.  
*He'll* never put on the black cap except  
for the worst of the worst,  
And the first may be last — I have heard  
it in church — and the last may  
be first.  
Suffering — O long-suffering — yes, as the  
Lord must know,  
Year after year in the mist and the wind  
and the shower and the snow.

## XIV.

Heard, have you? what? they have told  
 you he never repented his sin.  
 How do they know it? are *they* his  
 mother? are *you* of his kin?  
 Heard! have you ever heard, when the  
 storm on the downs began,  
 The wind that 'ill wail like a child and  
 the sea that 'ill moan like a man?

## XV.

Election, Election and Reprobation — it's  
 all very well.  
 But I go to-night to my boy, and I shall  
 not find him in Hell.  
 For I cared so much for my boy that the  
 Lord has look'd into my care,  
 And He means me I'm sure to be happy  
 with Willy, I know not where.

## XVI.

And if *he* be lost — but to save *my* soul,  
 that is all your desire:  
 Do you think that I care for *my* soul if  
 my boy be gone to the fire?  
 I have been with God in the dark — go,  
 go, you may leave me alone —  
 You never have borne a child — you are  
 just as hard as a stone.

## XVII.

Madam, I beg your pardon! I think  
 that you mean to be kind,  
 But I cannot hear what you say for my  
 Willy's voice in the wind —  
 The snow and the sky so bright — he used  
 but to call in the dark,  
 And he calls to me now from the church  
 and not from the gibbet — for  
 hark!  
 Nay — you can hear it yourself — it is  
 coming — shaking the walls —  
 Willy — the moon's in a cloud — Good-  
 night. I am going. He calls.

## THE NORTHERN COBBLER.

## I.

WAÄIT till our Sally cooms in, fur thou  
 mun a' sights<sup>1</sup> to tell.  
 Eh, but I be maäin glad to seeä tha sa  
 'arty an' well.

'Cast awaäy on a disolut lard wi' a  
 vartical soon<sup>2</sup>!'  
 Strange fur to goä fur to think what  
 saäilors a' seëan an' a' doon;  
 'Summat to drink — sa' 'ot?' I'a nowt  
 but Adam's wine:  
 What's the 'eät o' this little 'ill-side to the  
 'eät o' the line?

## II.

'What's i' tha bottle a-stanning theer?'  
 I'll tell tha. Gin.  
 But if thou wants thy grog, tha mun goä  
 fur it down to the inn.  
 Naay — fur I be maäin-glad, but thaw tha  
 was iver sa dry,  
 Thou gits naw gin fro' the bottle theer,  
 an' I'll tell tha why.

## III.

Meä an' thy sister was married, when  
 wur it? back-end o' June,  
 Ten year sin', and wa' 'greed as well as a  
 fiddle i' tune:  
 I could fettle and clump owd booöts and  
 shoes wi' the best on 'em all,  
 As fer as fro' Thursby thurn hup to  
 Harmsby and Hutterby Hall.  
 We was busy as beeä's i' the bloom an' as  
 'appy as 'art could think,  
 An' then the babby wur burn, and then  
 I taäkes to the drink.

## IV.

An' I weänt gaäinsaäy it, my lad, thaw  
 I be hafe shaämed on it now,  
 We could sing a good song at the Plow,  
 we could sing a good song at the  
 Plow;  
 Thaw once of a frosty night I slither'd an'  
 hurted my huck,<sup>3</sup>  
 An' I coom'd neck-an'-crop soomtimes  
 slaäpe down i' the squad an' the  
 muck:

<sup>1</sup> The vowels *aä*, pronounced separately though  
 in the closest conjunction, best render the sound  
 of the long *i* and *y* in this dialect. But since such  
 words as *craäin*', *daäin*', *whaäi*', *aä* (I), etc., look  
 awkward except in a page of express phonetics,  
 I have thought it better to leave the simple *i* and  
*y*, and to trust that my readers will give them the  
 broader pronunciation.

<sup>2</sup> The *oo* short, as in 'wood.'

<sup>3</sup> Hip.

An' once I fowt wi' the Taäilor — not  
 hafe ov a man, my lad —  
 Fur he scrawm'd an' scatted my faäce  
 like a cat, an' it maäde 'er sa mad  
 That Sally she turn'd a tongue-banger,<sup>1</sup>  
 an' raäted ma, 'Sottin' thy braäins  
 Guzzlin' an' soäkin' an' smoäkin' an'  
 hawmin'<sup>2</sup> about i' the laänes,  
 Soä sow-droonk that tha doesn not touch  
 thy 'at to the Squire; '  
 An' I looök'd cock-eyed at my noäse an'  
 I seeäd 'im a-gittin' o' fire;  
 But sin' I wur hallus i' liquor an' hallus  
 as droonk as a king,  
 Foäłks' coostom flitted awaäy like a kite  
 wi' a brokken string.

## V.

An' Sally she wesh'd foäłks' cloäths to  
 keep the wolf fro' the door,  
 Eh but the moor she riled me, she druv  
 me to drink the moor,  
 Fur I fun', when 'er back wur turn'd,  
 wheer Sally's mudd stockin' wur 'id,  
 An' I grabb'd the munny she maäde, and  
 I weär'd it o' liquor, I did.

## VI.

An' one night I cooms 'oäm like a bull  
 gotten loose at a faäir,  
 An' she wur a-waäitin' fo'mma, an' cryin'  
 and teärin' 'er 'aäir,  
 An' I tumbled athurt the craädle an'  
 sweär'd as I'd breäk ivry stick  
 O' furnitur 'ere i' the 'ouse, an' I gied  
 our Sally a kick,  
 An' I mash'd the taäbles an' chairs, an'  
 she an' the babby beäl'd,<sup>3</sup>  
 Fur I knaw'd naw moor what I did nor  
 a mortal beäst o' the feäld.

## VII.

An' when I waäked i' the murnin' I seeäd  
 that our Sally went laämed  
 Cos' o' the kick as I gied 'er, an' I wur  
 dreädful ashaämed;  
 An' Sally wur sloomy<sup>4</sup> an' draggle taäil'd  
 in an owd turn gown,  
 An' the babby's faäce wur'n't wesh'd an'  
 the 'ole 'ouse hupside down.

<sup>1</sup> Scold.    <sup>2</sup> Lounging.    <sup>3</sup> Bellowed, cried out.  
<sup>4</sup> Sluggish, out of spirits.

## VIII.

An' then I minded our Sally sa pratty  
 an' neät an' sweeät,  
 Straät as a pole an' cleän as a flower fro'  
 'eäd to feeät:  
 An' then I minded the fust kiss I gied  
 'er by Thursby thurn;  
 Theer wur a lark a-singin' 'is best of a  
 Sunday at murn,  
 Couldn't see 'im, we 'eärd 'im a-mountin'  
 oop 'igher an' 'igher,  
 An' then 'e turn'd to the sun, an' 'e  
 shined like a sparkle o' fire.  
 'Doesn't tha see 'im, she axes, 'fur I  
 can see 'im?' an' I  
 Seeäd nobbut the smile o' the sun as  
 danced in 'er pratty blue eye;  
 An' I says, 'I mun gie tha a kiss,' an'  
 Sally says 'Noä, thou moänt,'  
 But I gied 'er a kiss, an' then anoother,  
 an' Sally says 'doänt!'

## IX.

An' when we coom'd into Meeätin', at  
 fust she wur all in a tew,  
 But, arter, we sing'd the 'ymn together  
 like birds on a beugh;  
 An' Muggins 'e preäch'd o' Hell-fire an'  
 the loov o' God fur men,  
 An' then upo' coomin' awaäy Sally gied  
 me a kiss ov 'ersen.

## X.

Heer wur a fall fro' a kiss to a kick like  
 Saätan as fell  
 Down out o' heaven i' Hell-fire — thaw  
 theer's naw drinkin' i' Hell;  
 Meä fur to kick our Sally as kep the wolf  
 fro' the door,  
 All along o' the drink, fur I loov'd 'er  
 as well as afoor.

## XI.

Sa like a greät num-cumpus I blubber'd  
 awaäy o' the bed —  
 'Weänt niver do it naw moor;' an'  
 Sally looökt up an' she said,  
 'I'll upowd it<sup>1</sup> tha weänt; thou'rt like  
 the rest o' the men,

<sup>1</sup> I'll uphold it.

Thou'll goā sniffin' about the tap till tha  
does it ageān.  
Theer's thy hennemy, man, an' I knaws,  
as knaws tha sa well,  
That, if tha seeās 'im an' smells 'im tha'll  
foller 'im slick into Hell.'

## XII.

'Naäy,' says I, 'fur I weänt goā sniffin'  
about the tap.'  
'Weänt tha?' she says, an' mysen I  
thowt i' mysen 'mayhap.'  
'Noä: ' an' I started awaäy like a shot,  
an' down to the Hinn,  
An' I browt what tha seeās stannin' theer,  
yon big black bottle o' gin.

## XIII.

'That caps owt,'<sup>1</sup> says Sally, an' saw she  
begins to cry,  
But I puts it inter 'er 'ands an' I says to  
'er, 'Sally,' says I,  
'Stan' 'im theer, i' the naāme o' the Lord  
an' the power ov 'is Graāce,  
Stan' 'im theer fur I'll looök my hennemy  
strait i' the faāce,  
Stan' 'im theer i' the winder, an' let ma  
looök at 'im then,  
'E seeāms naw moor nor watter, an' 'e's  
the Devil's oān sen.'

## XIV.

An' I wur down i' tha mouth, couldn't do  
naw work an' all,  
Nasty an' snaggy an' shaäky, an' poonch'd  
my 'and wi' the hawl,  
But she wur a power o' coomfut, an'  
sattled 'ersen o' my knee,  
An' coāxd an' coodled me oop till ageān  
I feel'd mysen free.

## XV.

An' Sally she tell'd it about, an' foälk  
stood a-gawmin'<sup>2</sup> in'  
As thaw it wur summat bewitch'd instead  
of a quart o' gin;

<sup>1</sup> That's beyond everything.

<sup>2</sup> Staring vacantly.

An' some on 'em said it wur watter — an'  
I wur chousin' the wife,  
Fur I couldn't 'owd 'ands off gin, wur it  
nobbut to saāve my life;  
An' blacksmith 'e strips me the thick ov  
'is airm, an' 'e shaws it to me,  
'Feēal thou this! thou can't grow this  
upo' watter!' says he.  
An' Doctor 'e calls o' Sunday an' just as  
candles was lit,  
'Thou moānt do it,' he says, 'tha mun  
breäk 'im off bit by bit.'  
'Thou'rt but a Methody-man,' says Par-  
son, and laāys down 'is 'at,  
An' 'e 'points to the bottle o' gin, 'but I  
respecks tha fur that;'  
An' Squire, his oān very sen, walks down  
fro' the 'All to see,  
An' 'e spansk 'is 'and into mine, 'fur I  
respecks tha,' says 'e;  
An' coostom ageān draw'd in like a wind  
fro' far an' wide,  
And browt me the booöts to be cobbled  
fro' hafe the countryside.

## XVI.

An' theer 'e stans an' theer 'e shall stan  
to my dying daäy;  
I 'a gotten to loov 'im ageān in anoother  
kind of a waäy,  
Proud on 'im, like, my lad, an' I keeāps  
'im cleān an' bright,  
Loovs 'im, an' roobs 'im, an' doosts 'im,  
an' puts 'im back i' the light.

## XVII.

Wouldn't a pint a' sarved as well as a  
quart? Naw doubt;  
But I liked a bigger feller to fight wi' an'  
fowt it out.  
Fine an' meller 'e mun be by this, if I  
cared to taāste,  
But I moānt, my lad, and I weänt, fur  
I'd feäl mysen cleān disgraāced.

## XVIII.

An' once I said to the Missis, 'My lass,  
when I cooms to die,  
Smash the bottle to smithers, the Devil's  
in 'im,' said I.



But arter I chänged my mind, an' if  
Sally be left aloän,  
I'll hev 'im a-buried wi'mma an' taäke  
'im afoor the Throän.

## XIX.

Coom thou 'eer — yon laädy a-steppin  
along the streeät,  
Doesn't tha knaw 'er — sa pratty, an'  
feät, an' neät, an' sweeät?  
Look at the cloäths on 'er back, thebbe  
ammot spick-span-new,  
An' Tommy's faäce be as fresh as a codlin  
wesh'd i' the dew.

## XX.

'Ere be our Sally an' Tommy, an' we be  
a-goin' to dine,  
Baäcon an' taätes, an' a beslings-pud-  
din'<sup>1</sup> an' Adam's wine;  
But if tha wants ony grog tha mun goä  
fur it down to the Hinn,  
Fur I weänt shed a drop on 'is blood,  
noä, not fur Sally's oän kin.

## THE REVENGE.

## A BALLAD OF THE FLEET.

## I.

AT FLORES in the Azores Sir Richard  
Grenville lay,  
And a pinnace, like a flutter'd bird, came  
flying from far away:  
'Spanish ships of war at sea! we have  
sighted fifty-three!'  
Then sware Lord Thomas Howard:  
'Fore God I am no coward;  
But I cannot meet them here, for my  
ships are out of gear,  
And the half my men are sick. I must  
fly, but follow quick.  
We are six ships of the line; can we  
fight with fifty-three?'

## II.

Then spake Sir Richard Grenville: 'I  
know you are no coward;  
You fly them for a moment to fight with  
them again.

<sup>1</sup> A pudding made with the first milk of the  
cow after calving.

But I've ninety men and more that are  
lying sick ashore.  
I should count myself the coward if I  
left them, my Lord Howard,  
To these Inquisition dogs and the devil-  
doms of Spain.'

## III.

So Lord Howard past away with five  
ships of war that day,  
Till he melted like a cloud in the silent  
summer heaven;  
But Sir Richard bore in hand all his sick  
men from the land  
Very carefully and slow,  
Men of Bideford in Devon,  
And we laid them on the ballast down  
below;  
For we brought them all aboard,  
And they blest him in their pain, that  
they were not left to Spain,  
To the thumbscrew and the stake, for the  
glory of the Lord.

## IV.

He had only a hundred seamen to work  
the ship and to fight,  
And he sailed away from Flores till the  
Spaniard came in sight,  
With his huge sea-castles heaving upon  
the weather bow.  
'Shall we fight or shall we fly?  
Good Sir Richard, tell us now,  
For to fight is but to die!  
There'll be little of us left by the time  
this sun be set.'  
And Sir Richard said again: 'We be all  
good English men.  
Let us bang these dogs of Seville, the  
children of the devil,  
For I never turn'd my back upon Don or  
devil yet.'

## V.

Sir Richard spoke and he laugh'd, and  
we roar'd a hurrah, and so  
The little Revenge ran on sheer into the  
heart of the foe,  
With her hundred fighters on deck, and  
her ninety sick below;

For half of their fleet to the right and  
 half to the left were seen,  
 And the little Revenge ran on thro' the  
 long sea-lane between.

## VI.

Thousands of their soldiers look'd down  
 from their decks and laugh'd,  
 Thousands of their seamen made mock  
 at the mad little craft  
 Running on and on, till delay'd  
 By their mountain-like San Philip that,  
 of fifteen hundred tons,  
 And up-shadowing high above us with  
 her yawning tiers of guns,  
 Took the breath from our sails, and we  
 stay'd.

## VII.

And while now the great San Philip  
 hung above us like a cloud  
 Whence the thunderbolt will fall  
 Long and loud,  
 Four galleons drew away  
 From the Spanish fleet that day,  
 And two upon the larboard and two upon  
 the starboard lay,  
 And the battle-thunder broke from them  
 all.

## VIII.

But anon the great San Philip, she be-  
 thought herself and went  
 Having that within her womb that had  
 left her ill content;  
 And the rest they came aboard us, and  
 they fought us hand to hand,  
 For a dozen times they came with their  
 pikes and musqueteers,  
 And a dozen times we shook 'em off as a  
 dog that shakes his ears  
 When he leaps from the water to the land.

## IX.

And the sun went down, and the stars  
 came out far over the summer sea,  
 But never a moment ceased the fight of  
 the one and the fifty-three.  
 Ship after ship, the whole night long,  
 their high-built galleons came,  
 Ship after ship, the whole night long,  
 with her battle-thunder and flame;

Ship after ship, the whole night long,  
 drew back with her dead and her  
 shame.

For some were sunk and many were  
 shatter'd, and so could fight us no  
 more —

God of battles, was ever a battle like this  
 in the world before?

## x.

For he said 'Fight on! fight on!'  
 Tho' his vessel was all but a wreck;  
 And it chanced that, when half of the  
 short summer night was gone,  
 With a grisly wound to be drest he had  
 left the deck,  
 But a bullet struck him that was dressing  
 it suddenly dead,  
 And himself he was wounded again in  
 the side and the head,  
 And he said 'Fight on! fight on!'

## XI.

And the night went down, and the sun  
 smiled out far over the summer sea,  
 And the Spanish fleet with broken sides  
 lay round us all in a ring;  
 But they dared not touch us again, for  
 they fear'd that we still could  
 sting,  
 So they watch'd what the end would be.  
 And we had not fought them in vain,  
 But in perilous plight were we,  
 Seeing forty of our poor hundred were  
 slain,  
 And half of the rest of us maim'd for life  
 In the crash of the cannonades and the  
 desperate strife;  
 And the sick men down in the hold were  
 most of them stark and cold,  
 And the pikes were all broken or bent,  
 and the powder was all of it spent;  
 And the masts and the rigging were  
 lying over the side;  
 But Sir Richard cried in his English pride,  
 'We have fought such a fight for a day  
 and a night  
 As may never be fought again!  
 We have won great glory, my men!  
 And a day less or more  
 At sea or ashore,  
 We die — does it matter when?

Sink me the ship, Master Gunner — sink  
her, split her in twain!  
Fall into the hands of God, not into the  
hands of Spain!

## XII.

And the gunner said 'Ay, ay,' but the  
seamen made reply:  
'We have children, we have wives,  
And the Lord hath spared our lives.  
We will make the Spaniard promise, if  
we yield, to let us go;  
We shall live to fight again and to strike  
another blow.'  
And the lion there lay dying, and they  
yielded to the foe.

## XIII.

And the stately Spanish men to their  
flagship bore him then,  
Where they laid him by the mast, old  
Sir Richard caught at last,  
And they praised him to his face with  
their courtly foreign grace;  
But he rose upon their decks, and he cried:  
'I have fought for Queen and Faith like  
a valiant man and true;  
I have only done my duty as a man is  
bound to do:  
With a joyful spirit I Sir Richard Gren-  
ville die!'  
And he fell upon their decks, and he died.

## XIV.

And they stared at the dead that had  
been so valiant and true,  
And had holden the power and glory of  
Spain so cheap  
That he dared her with one little ship  
and his English few;  
Was he devil or man? He was devil  
for aught they knew,  
But they sank his body with honour down  
into the deep,  
And they mann'd the Revenge with a  
swarthier alien crew,  
And away she sail'd with her loss and  
long'd for her own;  
When a wind from the lands they had  
ruin'd awoke from sleep,  
And the water began to heave and the  
weather to moan,

And or ever that evening ended a great  
gale blew,  
And a wave like the wave that is raised  
by an earthquake grew,  
Till it smote on their hulls and their sails  
and their masts and their flags,  
And the whole sea plunged and fell on  
the shot-shatter'd navy of Spain,  
And the little Revenge herself went down  
by the island crags  
To be lost evermore in the main.

## THE SISTERS.

THEY have left the doors ajar; and by  
their clash,  
And prelude on the keys, I know the  
song,  
Their favourite — which I call 'The Tables  
Turned.'  
Evelyn begins it 'O diviner Air.'

## EVELYN.

O diviner Air,  
Thro' the heat, the drowth, the dust, the  
glare,  
Far from out the west in shadowing  
showers,  
Over all the meadow baked and bare,  
Making fresh and fair  
All the bowers and the flowers,  
Fainting flowers, faded bowers,  
Over all this weary world of ours,  
Breathe, diviner Air!

A sweet voice that — you scarce could  
better that.  
Now follows Edith echoing Evelyn.

## EDITH.

O diviner light,  
Thro' the cloud that roofs our noon with  
night,  
Thro' the blotting mist, the blinding  
showers,  
Far from out a sky for ever bright,  
Over all the woodland's flooded bowers,  
Over all the meadow's drowning flowers,  
Over all this ruin'd world of ours,  
Break, diviner light!

Marvellously like, their voices—and themselves!  
 Tho' one is somewhat deeper than the other,  
 As one is somewhat graver than the other—  
 Edith than Evelyn. Your good Uncle, whom  
 You count the father of your fortune,  
 longs  
 For this alliance: let me ask you then,  
 Which voice most takes you? for I do not doubt  
 Being a watchful parent, you are taken  
 With one or other: tho' sometimes I fear  
 You may be flickering, fluttering in a  
 doubt  
 Between the two — which must not be —  
 which might  
 Be death to one: they both are beautiful:  
 Evelyn is gayer, wittier, prettier, says  
 The common voice, if one may trust it:  
 she?  
 No! but the paler and the graver, Edith.  
 Woo her and gain her then: no wavering,  
 boy!  
 The graver is perhaps the one for you  
 Who jest and laugh so easily and so well.  
 For love will go by contrast, as by likes.

No sisters ever prized each other more.  
 Not so: their mother and her sister loved  
 More passionately still.

But that my best  
 And oldest friend, your Uncle, wishes it,  
 And that I know you worthy every way  
 To be my son, I might, perchance, be loath  
 To part them, or part from them: and  
 yet one  
 Should marry, or all the broad lands in  
 your view  
 From this bay window — which our house  
 has held  
 Three hundred years — will pass collaterally.

My father with a child on either knee,  
 A hand upon the head of either child,  
 Smoothing their locks, as golden as his  
 own  
 Were silver, 'get them wedded' would  
 he say.

And once my prattling Edith ask'd him  
 'why?'  
 Ay, why? said he, 'for why should I go  
 lame?'  
 Then told them of his wars, and of his  
 wound.  
 For see — this wine — the grape from  
 whence it flow'd  
 Was blackening on the slopes of Portugal,  
 When that brave soldier, down the terrible  
 ridge  
 Plunged in the last fierce charge at  
 Waterloo,  
 And caught the laming bullet. He left  
 me this,  
 Which yet retains a memory of its youth,  
 As I of mine, and my first passion.  
 Come!  
 Here's to your happy union with my child!

Yet must you change your name: no  
 fault of mine!  
 You say that you can do it as willingly  
 As birds make ready for their bridal-  
 time  
 By change of feather: for all that, my  
 boy,  
 Some birds are sick and sullen when they  
 moult.  
 An old and worthy name! but mine that  
 stirr'd  
 Among our civil wars and earlier too  
 Among the Roses, the more venerable.  
 I care not for a name — no fault of mine.  
 Once more — a happier marriage than my  
 own!

You see yon Lombard poplar on the  
 plain.  
 The highway running by it leaves a breadth  
 Of sward to left and right, where, long  
 ago,  
 One bright May morning in a world of  
 song,  
 I lay at leisure, watching overhead  
 The aërial poplar wave, an amber spire.

I dozed; I woke. An open landaulet  
 Whirl'd by, which, after it had past me,  
 show'd  
 Turning my way, the loveliest face on  
 earth.  
 The face of one there sitting opposite,

On whom I brought a strange unhappi-  
ness,  
That time I did not see.

Love at first sight  
May seem — with goodly rhyme and  
reason for it —

Possible — at first glimpse, and for a face  
Gone in a moment — strange. Yet once,  
when first

I came on lake Llanberris in the dark,  
A moonless night with storm — one light-  
ning-fork

Flash'd out the lake; and tho' I loiter'd  
there

The full day after, yet in retrospect  
That less than momentary thunder-sketch  
Of lake and mountain conquers all the  
day.

The Sun himself has limn'd the face  
for me.

Not quite so quickly, no, nor half as well.  
For look you here — the shadows are too  
deep,

And like the critic's blurring comment  
make

The veriest beauties of the work appear  
The darkest faults: the sweet eyes frown:  
the lips

Seem but a gash. My sole memorial  
Of Edith — no, the other, — both indeed.

So that bright face was flash'd thro'  
sense and soul

And by the poplar vanish'd — to be found  
Long after, as it seem'd, beneath the  
tall

Tree-bowers, and those long-sweeping  
beechnow boughs

Of our New Forest. I was there alone:  
The phantom of the whirling landaulet  
For ever past me by: when one quick  
peal

Of laughter drew me thro' the glimmer-  
ing glades

Down to the snowlike sparkle of a cloth  
On fern and foxglove. Lo, the face again,  
My Rosalind in this Arden — Edith — all  
One bloom of youth, health, beauty,  
happiness,

And moved to merriment at a passing  
jest.

There one of those about her knowing  
me  
Call'd me to join them; so with these I  
spent  
What seem'd my crowning hour, my day  
of days.

I woo'd her then, nor unsuccessfully,  
The worse for her, for me! was I content?  
Ay — no, not quite; for now and then I  
thought

Laziness, vague love-longings, the bright  
May,

Had made a heated haze to magnify  
The charm of Edith — that a man's ideal  
Is high in Heaven, and lodged with  
Plato's God,

Not findable here — content, and not con-  
tent,

In some such fashion as a man may be  
That having had the portrait of his friend  
Drawn by an artist, looks at it, and says,  
'Good! very like! not altogether he.'

As yet I had not bound myself by  
words,

Only believing I loved Edith, made  
Edith love *me*. Then came the day  
when I,

Flattering myself that all my doubts were  
fools

Born of the fool this Age that doubts of  
all —

Not I that day of Edith's love or mine —  
Had braced my purpose to declare my-  
self:

I stood upon the stairs of Paradise.  
The golden gates would open at a word.  
I spoke it — told her of my passion, seen  
And lost and found again, had got so  
far,

Had caught her hand, her eyelids fell —  
I heard

Wheels, and a noise of welcome at the  
doors —

On a sudden after two-Italian years  
Had set the blossom of her health again,  
The younger sister, Evelyn, enter'd —  
there,

There was the face, and altogether she.  
The mother fell about the daughter's  
neck,

The sisters closed in one another's arms,

Their people throng'd about them from  
the hall,  
And in the thick of question and reply  
I fled the house, driven by one angel face  
And all the Furies.

I was bound to her;  
I could not free myself in honour — bound  
Not by the sounded letter of the word,  
But counterpressures of the yielded hand  
That timorously and faintly echoed mine,  
Quick blushes, the sweet dwelling of her  
eyes  
Upon me when she thought I did not  
see —  
Were these not bonds? nay, nay, but  
could I wed her  
Loving the other? do her that great  
wrong?  
Had I not dream'd I loved her yester-  
morn?  
Had I not known where Love, at first a  
fear,  
Grew after marriage to full height and  
form?  
Yet after marriage, that mock-sister  
there —  
Brother-in-law — the fiery nearness of it —  
Unlawful and disloyal brotherhood —  
What end but darkness could ensue from  
this  
For all the three? So Love and Honour  
jarr'd  
Tho' Love and Honour join'd to raise  
the full  
High-tide of doubt that sway'd me up  
and down  
Advancing nor retreating.

Edith wrote :  
'My mother bids me ask' (I did not tell  
you —  
A widow with less guile than many a  
child.  
God help the wrinkled children that are  
Christ's  
As well as the plump cheek — she wrought  
us harm,  
Poor soul, not knowing) 'are you ill?'  
(so ran  
The letter) 'you have not been here of  
late.  
You will not find me here. At last I go

On that long-promised visit to the North.  
I told your wayside story to my mother  
And Evelyn. She remembers you.  
Farewell.

Pray come and see my mother. Almost  
blind  
With ever-growing cataract, yet she thinks  
She sees you when she hears. Again  
farewell.'

Cold words from one I had hoped to  
warm so far  
That I could stamp my image on her  
heart!  
'Pray come and see my mother, and  
farewell.'  
Cold, but as welcome as free airs of  
heaven  
After a dungeon's closeness. Selfish,  
strange!  
What dwarfs are men! my strangled  
vanity  
Utter'd a stifled cry — to have vext myself  
And all in vain for her — cold heart or  
none —  
No bride for me. Yet so my path was  
clear  
To win the sister.

Whom I woo'd and won.  
For Evelyn knew not of my former suit,  
Because the simple mother work'd upon  
By Edith pray'd me not to whisper of it.  
And Edith would be bridesmaid on the  
day.

But on that day, not being all at ease,  
I from the altar glancing back upon her,  
Before the first 'I will' was utter'd, saw  
The bridesmaid pale, statuelike, passion-  
less —

'No harm, no harm,' I turn'd again, and  
placed  
My ring upon the finger of my bride.

So, when we parted, Edith spoke no  
word,  
She wept no tear, but round my Evelyn  
clung  
In utter silence for so long, I thought,  
'What, will she never set her sister free?'

We left her, happy each in each, and  
then,  
As tho' the happiness of each in each



Were not enough, must fain have torrents,  
     lakes,  
 Hills, the great things of Nature and the  
     fair,  
 To lift us as it were from commonplace,  
 And help us to our joy. Better have  
     sent

Our Edith thro' the glories of the earth,  
 To change with her horizon, if true Love  
 Were not his own imperial all-in-all.

Far off we went. My God, I would not  
     live  
 Save that I think this gross hard-seem-  
     ing world  
 Is our misshaping vision of the Powers  
 Behind the world, that make our griefs  
     our gains.

For on the dark night of our marriage-  
     day  
 The great Tragedian, that had quench'd  
     herself  
 In that assumption of the bridesmaid—  
     she  
 That loved me—our true Edith—her  
     brain broke  
 With over-acting, till she rose and fled  
 Beneath a pitiless rush of Autumn rain  
 To the deaf church—to be let in—to  
     pray  
 Before *that* altar—so I think; and there  
 They found her beating the hard Protes-  
     tant doors.  
 She died and she was buried ere we knew.

I learnt it first. I had to speak. At  
     once  
 The bright quick smile of Evelyn, that  
     had sunn'd  
 The morning of our marriage, past away:  
 And on our home-return the daily want  
 Of Edith in the house, the garden, still  
 Haunted us like her ghost; and by and  
     by,  
 Either from that necessity for talk  
 Which lives with blindness, or plain in-  
     nocence  
 Of nature, or desire that her lost child  
 Should earn from both the praise of  
     heroism,  
 The mother broke her promise to the  
     dead,

And told the living daughter with what  
     love  
 Edith had welcomed my brief wooing of  
     her,  
 And all her sweet self-sacrifice and  
     death.

Henceforth that mystic bond betwixt  
     the twins—  
 Did I not tell you they were twins?—  
     prevail'd  
 So far that no caress could win my wife  
 Back to that passionate answer of full  
     heart  
 I had from her at first. Not that her  
     love,  
 Tho' scarce as great as Edith's power of  
     love,  
 Had lessen'd, but the mother's garrulous  
     wail  
 For ever woke the unhappy Past again,  
 Till that dead bridesmaid, meant to be  
     my bride,  
 Put forth cold hands between us, and I  
     fear'd  
 The very fountains of her life were chill'd;  
 So took her thence, and brought her here,  
     and here  
 She bore a child, whom reverently we  
     call'd  
 Edith; and in the second year was born  
 A second—this I named from her own  
     self,  
 Evelyn; then two weeks—no more—  
     she joined,  
 In and beyond the grave, that one she  
     loved.

Now in this quiet of declining life,  
 Thro' dreams by night and trances of the  
     day,  
 The sisters glide about me hand in hand,  
 Both beautiful alike, nor can I tell  
 One from the other, no, nor care to tell  
 One from the other, only know they  
     come,  
 They smile upon me, till, remembering  
     all  
 The love they both have born me, and  
     the love  
 I bore them both—divided as I am  
 From either by the stillness of the grave—  
 I know not which of these I love the  
     best.

But *you* love Edith; and her own true  
 eyes  
 Are traitors to her; our quick Evelyn—  
 The merrier, prettier, wittier, as they talk,  
 And not without good reason, my good  
 son —  
 Is yet untouch'd: and I that hold them  
 both  
 Dearest of all things — well, I am not  
 sure —  
 But if there lie a preference eitherway,  
 And in the rich vocabulary of Love  
 'Most dearest' be a true superlative —  
 I think / likewise love your Edith most.

THE VILLAGE WIFE; OR, THE  
 ENTAIL.<sup>1</sup>

I.

'OUSE-KEEPER sent tha my lass, fur New  
 Squire coom'd last night.  
 Butter an' heggs — yis — yis. I'll goã wi'  
 tha back: all right;  
 Butter I warrants be prime, an' I war-  
 rants the heggs be as well,  
 Hafe a pint o' milk runs out when ya  
 breãks the shell.

II.

Sit thysen down fur a bit: hev a glass o'  
 cowslip wine!  
 I liked the owd Squire an' 'is gells as  
 thaw they was gells o' mine,  
 Fur then we was all es one, the Squire  
 an' 'is darters an' me,  
 Hall but Miss Annie, the heldest, I niver  
 not took to she:  
 But Nelly, the last of the clutch,<sup>2</sup> I liked  
 'er the fust on 'em all,  
 Fur hoffens we talkt o' my darter es died  
 o' the fever at fall:  
 An' I thowt 'twur the will o' the Lord, but  
 Miss Annie she said it wur draãins,  
 Fur she hedn't naw coomfut in 'er, an'  
 arn'd naw thanks fur 'er paãins.  
 Eh? thebbe all wi' the Lord my childer,  
 I han't gotten none!  
 Sa new Squire's coom'd wi' 'is taãil in 'is  
 'and, an' owd Squire's gone.

<sup>1</sup> See note to 'Northern Cobbler.'

<sup>2</sup> A brood of chickens.

III.

Fur 'staäte be i' taãil, my lass: tha dosn'  
 know what that be?  
 But I knaws the law, I does, for the law-  
 yer ha towd it me.  
 'When theer's naw 'eãd to a 'Ouse by  
 the fault o' that ere maãle —  
 The gells they counts fur nowt, and the  
 next un he taãkes the taãil.'

IV.

What be the next un like? can tha tell  
 ony harm on 'im, lass? —  
 Naays sit down — naw 'urry — sa cowl! —  
 hev another glass!  
 Straänge an' cowl fur the time! we may  
 happen a fall o' snaw —  
 Not es I cares fur to hear ony harm, but  
 I likes to know.  
 An' I 'oãps es 'e beãnt booöklarn'd: but  
 'e dosn' not coom fro' the shere;  
 We'd anew o' that wi' the Squire, an' we  
 haãtes booöklarnin' 'ere.

V.

Fur Squire wur a Varsity scholard, an'  
 niver lookt arter the land —  
 Whoãts or tonups or taãtes — 'e 'ed hallus  
 a booök i' 'is 'and,  
 Hallus aloãn wi' 'is booöks, thaw nigh  
 upo' seventy year.  
 An' booöks, what's booöks? thou knaws  
 thebbe naither 'ere nor theer.

VI.

An' the gells, they hedn't naw taãils, an'  
 the lawyer he towd it me  
 That 'is taãil were soã tied up es he  
 couldn't cut down a tree!  
 'Drat the trees,' says I, to be sewer I  
 haãtes 'em, my lass,  
 Fur we puts the muck o' the land an'  
 they sucks the muck fro' the grass.

VII.

An' Squire wur hallus a-smilin', an' gied  
 to the tramps goin' by —  
 An' all o' the wust i' the parish — wi'  
 hoffens a drop in 'is eye.

An' ivry darter o' Squire's hed her awn  
ridin-erse to 'ersen,  
An' they rampaged about wi' their grooms,  
an' was 'untin' arter the men,  
An' hallus a-dallack<sup>1</sup> an' dizen'd out, an'  
a-buyin' new cloäthes,  
While 'e sit like a greät glimmer-gowk<sup>2</sup>  
wi' 'is glasses athurt 'is noäse,  
An' 'is noäse sa grufted wi' snuff es it  
couldn't be scroob'd awaäy,  
Fur atween 'is reädin' an' writin' 'e sniff  
up a box in a daäy,  
An' 'e niver runn'd arter the fox, nor  
arter the birds wi' 'is gun,  
An' 'e niver not shot one 'are, but 'e  
leäved it to Charlie 'is son,  
An' 'e niver not fish'd 'is awn ponds, but  
Charlie 'e cotch'd the pike,  
For 'e warn't not burn to the land, an' 'e  
didn't take kind to it like;  
But I 'eärs es 'e'd gie fur a howry<sup>3</sup> owd  
book thutty pound an' moor,  
An' 'e'd wrote an owd book, 'is awn sen,  
sa I know'd es 'e'd coom to be poor;  
An' 'e gied — I be fear'd fur to tell tha 'ow  
much — fur an owd scratted stoän,  
An' 'e digg'd up a loomp i' the land an'  
'e got a brown pot an' a boän,  
An' 'e bowt owd-money, es wouldn't goä,  
wi' good gowd o' the Queen,  
An' 'e bowt little statutes all-naäkt an'  
which was a shaäme to be seen;  
But 'e niver looökt ower a bill, nor 'e  
niver not seed to owt,  
An' 'e niver knowd nowt but booöks, an'  
booöks, as thou knaws, beänt nowt.

## VIII.

But owd Squire's laädy es long es she  
lived she kep 'em all clear,  
Thaw es long es she lived I niver hed  
none of 'er darters 'ere;  
But arter she died we was all es one, the  
childer an' me,  
An' sarvints runn'd in an' out, an' offens  
we hed 'em to tea.  
Lawk! 'ow I laugh'd when the lasses 'ud  
talk o' their Missis's waäys,  
An' the Missis's talk'd o' the lasses. —  
I'll tell tha some o' these daäys.

<sup>1</sup> Overdrest in gay colours.<sup>2</sup> Owl.<sup>3</sup> Filthy.

Hoänly Miss Annie were saw stuck oop,  
like 'er mother afoor —  
'Er an' 'er blessed darter — they niver  
derken'd my door.

## IX.

An' Squire 'e smiled an' 'e smiled till  
'e'd gotten a fright at last,  
An' 'e calls fur 'is son, fur the 'turney's  
letters they foller'd sa fast;  
But Squire wur afeard o' 'is son, an' 'e  
says to 'im, neek as a mouse,  
'Lad, thou mun cut off thy taäil, or the  
gells 'ull goä to the 'Ouse,  
Fur I finds es I be that i' debt, es I 'oäps  
es thou'll 'elp me a bit,  
An' if thou'll 'gree to cut off thy taäil I  
may saäve mysen yit.'

## X.

But Charlie 'e sets back 'is ears, an' 'e  
sweärs, an' 'e says to 'im 'Noä.  
I've gotten the 'staäte by the taäil an'  
be dang'd if I iver let goä!  
Coom! coom! feyther, 'e says, 'why  
shouldn't thy booöks be sowd?  
I hears es soom o' thy booöks mebbe  
worth their weight i' gowd.'

## XI.

Heäps an' heäps o' booöks, I ha' see'd  
'em, belong'd to the Squire,  
But the lasses 'ed teärd out leäves i' the  
middle to kindle the fire;  
Sa moäst on 'is owd big booöks fetch'd  
nigh to nowt at the saäle,  
And Squire were at Charlie ageän to git  
'im to cut off 'is taäil.

## XII.

Ya wouldn't find Charlie's likes — 'e were  
that outdacious at 'oäm,  
Not thaw ya went fur to raäke out Hell  
wi' a small-tooth coämb —  
Droonk wi' the Quoloty's wine, an' droonk  
wi' the farmer's aäle,  
Mad wi' the lasses an' all — an' 'e would-  
n't cut off the taäil.

## XIII.

Thou's coom'd oop by the beck; and a  
 thurn be a-grawin' theer,  
 I niver ha' see'd it sa white wi' the Maäy  
 es I see'd it to-year —  
 Theerabouts Charlie joompt — and it gied  
 me a scare tother night,  
 Fur I thowt it wur Charlie's ghoäst i' the  
 derk, fur it looökt sa white.  
 'Billy,' says 'e, 'hev a joomp!' — thaw  
 the banks o' the beck be sa high,  
 Fur 'e ca'd 'is 'erse Billy-rough-un, thaw  
 niver a hair wur awry;  
 But Billy fell bakkuds o' Charlie, an'  
 Charlie 'e brok 'is neck,  
 Sa theer wur a hend o' the taäil, fur 'e  
 lost 'is taäil i' the beck.

## XIV.

Sa 'is taäil wur lost an' 'is booöks wur  
 gone an' 'is boy wur deääd,  
 An' Squire 'e smiled, an' 'e smiled, but 'e  
 niver not lift oop 'is 'eääd:  
 Hallus a soft un Squire! an' 'e smiled,  
 fur 'e hedn't naw friend,  
 Sa feyther an' son was buried together,  
 an' this wur the hend.

## XV.

An' Parson es hesn't the call, nor the  
 mooney, but hes the pride,  
 'E reäds of a sewer an' sartan 'oäp o'  
 the tother side;  
 But I beänt that sewer es the Lord, how-  
 siver they praäy'd an' praäy'd,  
 Lets them inter 'eaven eäsy es leäves  
 their debts to be paäid.  
 Siver the mou'ds rattled down upo' poor  
 owd Squire i' the wood,  
 An' I cried along wi' the gells, fur they  
 weänt niver coom to naw good.

## XVI.

Fur Molly the long un she walkt awaäy  
 wi' a hofferer lad,  
 An' nawbody 'eärd on 'er sän, sa o' coorse  
 she be gone to the bad!  
 An' Lucy wur lääme o' one leg, sweet-  
 'arts she niver 'ed none —  
 Straänge an' unheppen<sup>1</sup> Miss Lucy! we  
 naämed her 'Dot an' gaw one!'

<sup>1</sup> Ungainly, awkward.

An' Hetty wur weak i' the hattics, wi'out  
 ony harm i' the legs,  
 An' the fever 'ed baäked Jinny's 'eääd es  
 bald es one o' them heggs,  
 An' Nelly wur up fro' the craädle es big  
 i' the mouth es a crow,  
 An' saw she mun hammergrate,<sup>1</sup> lass, or  
 she weänt git a maäte onyhow!  
 An' es for Miss Annie es call'd me afoor  
 my awn foälks to my faäce  
 'A hignorant village wife as 'ud hev to  
 be larn'd 'er awn plaäce,'  
 Hes fur Miss Hannie the heldest hes now  
 be a-grawin' sa howd,  
 I knaws that mooch o' sheä, es it beänt  
 not fit to be tow'd!

## XVII.

Sa I didn't not taäke it kindly ov owd  
 Miss Annie to saäy  
 Es I should be talkin' ageän 'em, es soon  
 es they went awaäy,  
 Fur, lawks! 'ow I cried when they went,  
 an' our Nelly she gied me 'er 'and,  
 Fur I'd ha' done owt for the Squire an'  
 'is gells es belong'd to the land;  
 Booöks, es I said afoor, thebbe neyther  
 'ere nor theer!  
 But I sarved 'em wi' butter an' heggs fur  
 huppuds o' twenty year.

## XVIII.

An' they hallus paäid what I hax'd, sa I  
 hallus deal'd wi' the Hall,  
 An' they knaw'd what butter wur, an' they  
 knaw'd what a begg wur an' all;  
 Hugger-mugger they lived, but they  
 wasn't that eäsy to pleäse,  
 Till I gied 'em Hinjian curn, an' they  
 lääid big heggs es tha seeäs;  
 An' I niver puts saäme<sup>2</sup> i' my butter,  
 they does it at Willis's farm,  
 Taäste another drop o' the wine — tweänt  
 do tha naw harm.

## XIX.

Sa new Squire's coom'd wi' 'is taäil in 'is  
 'and, an' owd Squire's gone;  
 I heard 'im a roomlin' by, but arter my  
 nightcap wur on;

<sup>1</sup> Emigrate.<sup>2</sup> Lard.

Sa I han't clapt eyes on 'im yit, fur he  
 coom'd last night sa laäte —  
 Pluksh! ! !<sup>1</sup> the hens i' the peäs! why  
 didn't tha hesp the gaäte?

## IN THE CHILDREN'S HOSPITAL.

EMMIE.

I.

OUR doctor had call'd in another, I never  
 had seen him before,  
 But he sent a chill to my heart when I  
 saw him come in at the door,  
 Fresh from the surgery-schools of France  
 and of other lands —  
 Harsh red hair, big voice, big chest, big  
 merciless hands!  
 Wonderful cures he had done, O yes, but  
 they said too of him  
 He was happier using the knife than in  
 trying to save the limb,  
 And that I can well believe, for he look'd  
 so coarse and so red,  
 I could think he was one of those who  
 would break their jests on the dead,  
 And mangle the living dog that had loved  
 him and fawn'd at his knee —  
 Drench'd with the hellish oorali — that  
 ever such things should be!

II.

Here was a boy — I am sure that some of  
 our children would die  
 But for the voice of Love, and the smile,  
 and the comforting eye —  
 Here was a boy in the ward, every bone  
 seem'd out of its place —  
 Caught in a mill and crush'd — it was all  
 but a hopeless case:  
 And he handled him gently enough; but  
 his voice and his face were not kind,  
 And it was but a hopeless case, he had  
 seen it and made up his mind,  
 And he said to me roughly 'The lad will  
 need little more of your care.'  
 'All the more need,' I told him, 'to seek  
 the Lord Jesus in prayer;

<sup>1</sup>A cry accompanied by a clapping of hands  
 to scare trespassing fowl.

They are all his children here, and I pray  
 for them all as my own: '  
 But he turn'd to me, 'Ay, good woman,  
 can prayer set a broken bone? '  
 Then he mutter'd half to himself, but I  
 know that I heard him say  
 'All very well — but the good Lord Jesus  
 has had his day.'

III.

Had? has it come? It has only dawn'd.  
 It will come by and by.  
 O how could I serve in the wards if the  
 hope of the world were a lie?  
 How could I bear with the sights and the  
 loathsome smells of disease  
 But that He said 'Ye do it to me, when  
 ye do it to these?'

IV.

So he went. And we past to this ward  
 where the younger children are  
 laid:  
 Here is the cot of our orphan, our dar-  
 ling, our meek little maid;  
 Empty you see just now! We have lost  
 her who loved her so much —  
 Patient of pain tho' as quick as a sensi-  
 tive plant to the touch;  
 Hers was the prettiest prattle, it often  
 moved me to tears,  
 Hers was the gratefullest heart I have  
 found in a child of her years —  
 Nay, you remember our Emmie; you used  
 to send her the flowers;  
 How she would smile at 'em, play with  
 'em, talk to 'em hours after hours!  
 They that can wander at will where the  
 works of the Lord are reveal'd  
 Little guess what joy can be got from a  
 cowslip out of the field;  
 Flowers to these 'spirits in prison' are all  
 they can know of the spring,  
 They freshen and sweeten the wards like  
 the waft of an Angel's wing;  
 And she lay with a flower in one hand and  
 her thin hands crost on her breast —  
 Wan, but as pretty as heart can desire,  
 and we thought her at rest,  
 Quietly sleeping — so quiet, our doctor  
 said 'Poor little dear,  
 Nurse, I must do it to-morrow; she'll  
 never live thro' it, I fear.'

## v.

I walk'd with our kindly old doctor as  
far as the head of the stair,  
Then I return'd to the ward; the child  
didn't see I was there.

## vi.

Never since I was nurse, had I been so  
grieved and so vex't!  
Emmie had heard him. Softly she call'd  
from her cot to the next,  
'He says I shall never live thro' it, O  
Annie, what shall I do?'  
Annie consider'd. 'If I,' said the wise  
little Annie, 'was you,  
I should cry to the dear Lord Jesus to  
help me, for, Emmie, you see,  
It's all in the picture there: "Little  
children should come to me."''  
(Meaning the print that you gave us, I  
find that it always can please  
Our children, the dear Lord Jesus with  
children about his knees.)  
'Yes, and I will,' said Emmie, 'but then  
if I call to the Lord,  
How should he know that it's me? such  
a lot of beds in the ward!'  
That was a puzzle for Annie. Again she  
consider'd and said:  
'Emmie, you put out your arms, and you  
leave 'em outside on the bed —  
The Lord has so *much* to see to! but,  
Emmie, you tell it him plain,  
It's the little girl with her arms lying out  
on the counterpane.'

## vii.

I had sat three nights by the child — I  
could not watch her for four —  
My brain had begun to reel — I felt I  
could do it no more.  
That was my sleeping-night, but I thought  
that it never would pass.  
There was a thunderclap once, and a  
clatter of hail on the glass,  
And there was a phantom cry that I heard  
as I tost about,  
The motherless bleat of a lamb in the  
storm and the darkness without;  
My sleep was broken besides with dreams  
of the dreadful knife  
And fears for our delicate Emmie who  
scarce would escape with her life;

Then in the gray of the morning it seem'd  
she stood by me and smiled,  
And the doctor came at his hour, and we  
went to see to the child.

## viii.

He had brought his ghastly tools: we  
believed her asleep again —  
Her dear, long, lean, little arms lying out  
on the counterpane;  
Say that His day is done! Ah why should  
we care what they say?  
The Lord of the children had heard her,  
and Emmie had past away.

DEDICATORY POEM TO THE  
PRINCESS ALICE.

DEAD PRINCESS, living Power, if that,  
which lived  
True life, live on — and if the fatal kiss,  
Born of true life and love, divorce thee  
not  
From earthly love and life — if what we  
call  
The spirit flash not all at once from out  
This shadow into Substance — then per-  
haps  
The mellow'd murmur of the people's  
praise  
From thine own State, and all our  
breadth of realm,  
Where Love and Longing dress thy deeds  
in light,  
Ascends to thee; and this March morn  
that sees  
Thy Soldier-brother's bridal orange-bloom  
Break thro' the yews and cypress of thy  
grave,  
And thine Imperial mother smile again,  
May send one ray to thee! and who can  
tell —  
Thou — England's England-loving daugh-  
ter — thou  
Dying so English thou wouldst have her  
flag  
Borne on thy coffin — where is he can  
swear  
But that some broken gleam from our  
poor earth  
May touch thee, while remembering thee,  
I lay



At thy pale feet this ballad of the deeds  
Of England, and her banner in the  
East?

## THE DEFENCE OF LUCKNOW.

## I.

BANNER of England, not for a season, O  
banner of Britain, hast thou  
Floated in conquering battle or flapt to  
the battle-cry!  
Never with mightier glory than when we  
had rear'd thee on high  
Flying at top of the roofs in the ghastly  
siege of Lucknow—  
Shot thro' the staff or the halyard, but  
ever we raised thee anew,  
And ever upon the topmost roof our  
banner of England blew.

## II.

Frail were the works that defended the  
hold that we held with our lives—  
Women and children among us, God help  
them, our children and wives!  
Hold it we might—and for fifteen days  
or for twenty at most.  
'Never surrender, I charge you, but  
every man die at his post!'  
Voice of the dead whom we loved, our  
Lawrence the best of the brave:  
Cold were his brows when we kiss'd  
him—we laid him that night in  
his grave.  
'Every man die at his post!' and there  
hail'd on our houses and halls  
Death from their rifle-bullets, and death  
from their cannon-balls,  
Death in our innermost chamber, and  
death at our slight barricade,  
Death while we stood with the musket,  
and death while we stoopt to the  
spade,  
Death to the dying, and wounds to the  
wounded, for often there fell,  
Striking the hospital wall, crashing thro'  
it, their shot and their shell,  
Death—for their spies were among us,  
their marksmen were told of our  
best,  
So that the brute bullet broke thro' the  
brain that could think for the rest;

Bullets would sing by our foreheads, and  
bullets would rain at our feet—  
Fire from ten thousand at once of the  
rebels that girdled us round—  
Death at the glimpse of a finger from  
over the breadth of a street,  
Death from the heights of the mosque  
and the palace, and death in the  
ground!  
Mine? yes, a mine! Countermine!  
down, down! and creep thro' the  
hole!  
Keep the revolver in hand! you can hear  
him—the murderous mole!  
Quiet, ah! quiet—wait till the point of  
the pickaxe be thro'!  
Click with the pick, coming nearer and  
nearer again than before—  
Now let it speak, and you fire, and the  
dark pioneer is no more;  
And ever upon the topmost roof our  
banner of England blew!

## III.

Ay, but the foe sprung his mine many  
times, and it chanced on a day  
Soon as the blast of that underground  
thunderclap echo'd away,  
Dark thro' the smoke and the sulphur  
like so many fiends in their  
hell—  
Cannon-shot, musket-shot, volley on  
volley, and yell upon yell—  
Fiercely on all the defences our myriad  
enemy fell.  
What have they done? where is it? Out  
yonder. Guard the Redan!  
Storm at the Water-gate! storm at the  
Bailey-gate! storm, and it ran  
Surging and swaying all round us, as  
ocean on every side  
Plunges and heaves at a bank that is  
daily devour'd by the tide—  
So many thousands that if they be bold  
enough, who shall escape?  
Kill or be kill'd, live or die, they shall  
know we are soldiers and men!  
Ready! take aim at their leaders—  
their masses are gapp'd with our  
grape—  
Backward they reel like the wave, like  
the wave flinging forward again,

Flying and foil'd at the last by the hand-  
ful they could not subdue;  
And ever upon the topmost roof our  
banner of England blew.

## IV.

Handful of men as we were, we were  
English in heart and in limb,  
Strong with the strength of the race to  
command, to obey, to endure,  
Each of us fought as if hope for the gar-  
rison hung but on him;  
Still — could we watch at all points? we  
were every day fewer and fewer.  
There was a whisper among us, but only  
a whisper that past:  
'Children and wives — if the tigers leap  
into the fold unawares —  
Every man die at his post — and the foe  
may outlive us at last —  
Better to fall by the hands that they love,  
than to fall into theirs!' —  
Roar upon roar in a moment two mines  
by the enemy sprung  
Clove into perilous chasms our walls and  
our poor palisades.  
Rifleman, true is your heart, but be sure  
that your hand be as true!  
Sharp is the fire of assault, better aimed  
are your flank fusillades —  
Twice do we hurl them to earth from the  
ladders to which they had clung,  
Twice from the ditch where they shelter  
we drive them with hand-grenades;  
And ever upon the topmost roof our  
banner of England blew.

## V.

Then on another wild morning another  
wild earthquake out-tore  
Clean from our lines of defence ten or  
twelve good paces or more.  
Rifleman, high on the roof, hidden there  
from the light of the sun —  
One has leapt up on the breach, crying  
out: 'Follow me, follow me!' —  
Mark him — he falls! then another, and  
*him* too, and down goes he.  
Had they been bold enough then, who  
can tell but the traitors had won?  
Boardings and rafters and doors — an em-  
brasure! make way for the gun!

Now double-charge it with grape! It is  
charged and we fire, and they  
run.

Praise to our Indian brothers, and let the  
dark face have his due!  
Thanks to the kindly dark faces who  
fought with us, faithful and few,  
Fought with the bravest among us, and  
drove them, and smote them, and  
slew,  
That ever upon the topmost roof our  
banner in India blew.

## VI.

Men will forget what we suffer and not  
what we do. We can fight!  
But to be soldier all day and be sentinel  
all thro' the night —  
Ever the mine and assault, our sallies,  
their lying alarms,  
Bugles and drums in the darkness, and  
shoutings and soundings to arms,  
Ever the labour of fifty that had to be  
done by five,  
Ever the marvel among us that one should  
be left alive,  
Ever the day with its traitorous death  
from the loopholes around,  
Ever the night with its coffinless corpse  
to be laid in the ground,  
Heat like the mouth of a hell, or a deluge  
of cataract skies,  
Stench of old offal decaying, and infinite  
torment of flies,  
Thoughts of the breezes of May blowing  
over an English field,  
Cholera, scurvy, and fever, the wound  
that *would* not be heal'd,  
Lopping away of the limb by the pitiful-  
pitiless knife, —  
Torture and trouble in vain, — for it never  
could save us a life.  
Valour of delicate women who tended the  
hospital bed,  
Horror of women in travail among the  
dying and dead,  
Grief for our perishing children, and  
never a moment for grief,  
Toil and ineffable weariness, faltering  
hopes of relief,  
Havelock baffled, or beaten, or butcher'd  
for all that we knew —

Then day and night, day and night, coming  
down on the still-shatter'd walls  
Millions of musket-bullets, and thousands  
of cannon-balls —  
But ever upon the topmost roof our  
banner of England blew.

## VII.

Hark cannonade, fusillade ! is it true what  
was told by the scout,  
Outram and Havelock breaking their way  
through the fell mutineers?  
Surely the pibroch of Europe is ringing  
again in our ears !  
All on a sudden the garrison utter a jubila-  
nt shout,  
Havelock's glorious Highlanders answer  
with conquering cheers,  
Sick from the hospital echo them, women  
and children come out,  
Blessing the wholesome white faces of  
Havelock's good fusileers,  
Kissing the war-harden'd hand of the  
Highlander wet with their tears !  
Dance to the pibroch ! — saved ! we are  
saved ! — is it you ? is it you ?  
Saved by the valour of Havelock, saved  
by the blessing of Heaven !  
' Hold it for fifteen days ! ' we have held  
it for eighty-seven !  
And ever aloft on the palace roof the old  
banner of England blew.

SIR JOHN OLDCASTLE, LORD  
COBHAM.

(IN WALES.)

My friend should meet me somewhere  
hereabout  
To take me to that hiding in the hills.

I have broke their cage, no gilded one,  
I trow —  
I read no more the prisoner's mute wail  
Scribbled or carved upon the pitiless  
stone ;  
I find hard rocks, hard life, hard cheer,  
or none,  
For I am emptier than a friar's brains ;  
But God is with me in this wilderness,

These wet black passes and foam-churn-  
ing chasms —  
And God's free air, and hope of better  
things.

I would I knew their speech ; not now  
to glean,  
Not now — I hope to do it — some scat-  
ter'd ears,  
Some ears for Christ in this wild field of  
Wales —  
But, bread, merely for bread. This  
tongue that wagg'd  
They said with such heretical arrogance  
Against the proud archbishop Arundel —  
So much God's cause was fluent in it —  
is here  
But as a Latin Bible to the crowd ;  
' Bara ! ' — what use ? The Shepherd,  
when I speak,  
Veiling a sudden eyelid with his hard  
' Dim Saesneg ' passes, wroth at things  
of old —  
No fault of mine. Had he God's word  
in Welsh  
He might be kindlier : happily come the  
day !

Not least art thou, thou little Bethle-  
hem  
In Judah, for in thee the Lord was born ;  
Nor thou in Britain, little Lutterworth,  
Least, for in thee the word was born  
again.

Heaven-sweet Evangel, ever-living  
word,  
Who whilome spakest to the South in  
Greek  
About the soft Mediterranean shores,  
And then in Latin to the Latin crowd,  
As good need was — thou hast come to  
talk our isle.  
Hereafter thou, fulfilling Pentecost,  
Must learn to use the tongues of all the  
world.  
Yet art thou thine own witness that thou  
bringest  
Not peace, a sword, a fire.  
What did he say,  
My frighted Wiclif-preacher whom I  
crost  
In flying hither ? that one night a crowd

Throng'd the waste field about the city  
gates:

The king was on them suddenly with a  
host.

Why there? they came to hear their  
preacher. Then

Some cried on Cobham, on the good  
Lord Cobham;

Ay, for they love me! but the king—  
nor voice

Nor finger raised against him—took and  
hang'd,

Took, hang'd and burnt—how many—  
thirty-nine—

Call'd it rebellion—hang'd, poor friends,  
as rebels

And burn'd alive as heretics! for your  
Priest

Labels—to take the king along with  
him—

All heresy, treason: but to call men  
traitors

May make men traitors.

Rose of Lancaster,  
Red in thy birth, redder with household  
war,

Now reddest with the blood of holy  
men,

Redder to be, red rose of Lancaster—

If somewhere in the North, as Rumour  
sang

Fluttering the hawks of this crown-lust-  
ing line—

By firth and loch thy silver sister grow,<sup>1</sup>

That were my rose, there my allegiance  
due.

Self-starved, they say—nay, murder'd,  
doubtless dead.

So to this king I cleaved: my friend was  
he,

Once my fast friend: I would have given  
my life

To help his own from scathe, a thousand  
lives

To save his soul. He might have come  
to learn

Our Wiclif's learning: but the worldly  
Priests

Who fear the king's hard common-sense  
should find

What rotten piles uphold their mason-  
work,

<sup>1</sup> Richard II.

Urge him to foreign war. O had he  
will'd

I might have stricken a lusty stroke for  
him,

But he would not; far liever led my  
friend

Back to the pure and universal church,  
But he would not: whether that heirless  
flaw

In his throne's title make him feel so  
frail,

He leans on Antichrist; or that his mind,  
So quick, so capable in soldiership,

In matters of the faith, alas the while!  
More worth than all the kingdoms of  
this world,

Runs in the rut, a coward to the Priest.

Burnt—good Sir Roger Acton, my  
dear friend!

Burnt too, my faithful preacher, Beverley!  
Lord give thou power to thy two wit-  
nesses!

Lest the false faith make merry over  
them!

Two—nay, but thirty-nine have risen and  
stand,

Dark with the smoke of human sacrifice,  
Before thy light, and cry continually—

Cry—against whom?

Him, who should bear the sword  
Of Justice—what! the kingly, kindly  
boy;

Who took the world so easily heretofore,  
My boon companion, tavern-fellow—him

Who gibed and japed—in many a merry  
tale

That shook our sides—at Pardoners,  
Summoners,

Friars, absolution-sellers, monkeries

And nunneries, when the wild hour and  
the wine

Had set the wits aflame.

Harry of Monmouth,  
Or Amurath of the East?

Better to sink  
Thy fleurs-de-lys in slime again, and fling  
Thy royalty back into the riotous fits

Of wine and harlotry—thy shame, and  
mine,

Thy comrade—than to persecute the  
Lord,

And play the Saul that never will be Paul.



So mock'd, so spurn'd, so baited two  
whole days —

I lost myself and fell from evenness,  
And rail'd at all the Popes, that ever  
since

Sylvester shed the venom of world-  
wealth

Into the church, had only prov'n them-  
selves

Poisoners, murderers. Well — God par-  
don all —

Me, them, and all the world — yea, that  
proud Priest,

That mock-meek mouth of utter Anti-  
christ,

That traitor to King Richard and the  
truth,

Who rose and doom'd me to the fire.

Amen!

Nay, I can burn, so that the Lord of life  
Be by me in my death.

Those three! the fourth  
Was like the Son of God! Not burnt  
were they.

On *them* the smell of burning had not  
past.

That was a miracle to convert the king.  
These Pharisees, this Caiaphas-Arundel  
What miracle could turn? *He* here  
again,

*He* thwarting their traditions of Him-  
self,

*He* would be found a heretic to Himself,  
And doom'd to burn alive.

So, caught, I burn.

Burn? heathen men have borne as much  
as this,

For freedom, or the sake of those they  
loved,

Or some less cause, some cause far less  
than mine;

For every other cause is less than  
mine.

The moth will singe her wings, and  
singed return,

Her love of light quenching her fear of  
pain —

How now, my soul, we do not heed the  
fire?

Faint-hearted? tut! — faint-stomach'd!  
faint as I am,

God willing, I will burn for Him.

Who comes?

A thousand marks are set upon my  
head.

Friend? — foe perhaps — a tussle for it  
then!

Nay, but my friend. Thou art so well  
disguised,

I knew thee not. Hast thou brought  
bread with thee?

I have not broken bread for fifty hours.  
None? I am damn'd already by the

Priest

For holding there was bread where bread  
was none —

No bread. My friends await me yonder?  
Yes.

Lead on then. *Up* the mountain? Is  
it far?

Not far. Climb first and reach me down  
thy hand.

I am not like to die for lack of bread

For I must live to testify by fire.<sup>1</sup>

#### COLUMBUS.

CHAINS, my good lord: in your raised  
brows I read

Some wonder at our chamber ornaments.  
We brought this iron from our isles of  
gold.

Does the king know you deign to visit  
him

Whom once he rose from off his throne  
to greet

Before his people, like his brother king?  
I saw your face that morning in the crowd.

At Barcelona — tho' you were not then  
So bearded. Yes. The city deck'd  
herself

To meet me, roar'd my name; the king,  
the queen

Bade me be seated, speak, and tell them  
all

The story of my voyage, and while I  
spoke

The crowd's roar fell as at the 'Peace,  
be still!'

And when I ceased to speak, the king,  
the queen,

<sup>1</sup> He was burnt on Christmas Day, 1417.



Sank from their thrones, and melted into  
tears,  
And knelt, and lifted hand and heart and  
voice  
In praise to God who led me thro' the  
waste.  
And then the great 'Laudamus' rose to  
heaven.

Chains for the Admiral of the Ocean!  
chains  
For him who gave a new heaven, a new  
earth,  
As holy John had prophesied of me,  
Gave glory and more empire to the kings  
Of Spain than all their battles! chains  
for him  
Who push'd his prows into the setting  
sun,  
And made West East, and sail'd the  
Dragon's mouth,  
And came upon the Mountain of the  
World,  
And saw the rivers roll from Paradise!

Chains! we are Admirals of the Ocean,  
we,  
We and our sons for ever. Ferdinand  
Hath sign'd it and our Holy Catholic  
queen —  
Of the Ocean — of the Indies — Admirals  
we —  
Our title, which we never mean to yield,  
Our guerdon not alone for what we did,  
But our amends for all we might have  
done —  
The vast occasion of our stronger life —  
Eighteen long years of waste, seven in  
your Spain,  
Lost, showing courts and kings a truth  
the babe  
Will suck in with his milk hereafter —  
earth  
A sphere.

Were *you* at Salamanca? No.  
We fronted there the learning of all  
Spain,  
All their cosmogonies, their astronomies:  
Guess-work *they* guess'd it, but the golden  
guess  
Is morning-star to the full round of truth.  
No guess-work! I was certain of my goal;

Some thought it heresy, but that would  
not hold.  
King David call'd the heavens a hide, a  
tent  
Spread over earth, and so this earth was  
flat:  
Some cited old Lactantius: could it be  
That trees grew downward, rain fell  
upward, men  
Walk'd like the fly on ceilings? and be-  
sides,  
The great Augustine wrote that none  
could breathe  
Within the zone of heat; so might there  
be  
Two Adams, two mankind, and that  
was clean  
Against God's word: thus was I beaten  
back,  
And chiefly to my sorrow by the Church,  
And thought to turn my face from Spain,  
appeal  
Once more to France or England; but  
our Queen  
Recall'd me, for at last their Highnesses  
Were half-assured this earth might be a  
sphere.

All glory to the all-blessed Trinity,  
All glory to the mother of our Lord,  
And Holy Church, from whom I never  
swerved  
Not even by one hair's-breadth of heresy,  
I have accomplish'd what I came to do.

Not yet — not all — last night a dream  
— I sail'd  
On my first voyage, harass'd by the frights  
Of my first crew, their curses and their  
groans.  
The great flame-banner borne by Tene-  
riffe,  
The compass, like an old friend false at  
last  
In our most need, appall'd them, and the  
wind  
Still westward, and the weedy seas — at  
length  
The landbird, and the branch with berries  
on it,  
The carven staff — and last the light, the  
light  
On Guanahani! but I changed the name;

San Salvador I call'd it; and the light  
 Grew as I gazed, and brought out a broad  
 sky  
 Of dawning over — not those alien palms,  
 The marvel of that fair new nature  
 — not  
 That Indian isle, but our most ancient  
 East  
 Moriah with Jerusalem; and I saw  
 The glory of the Lord flash up, and beat  
 Thro' all the homely town from jasper,  
 sapphire,  
 Chalcedony, emerald, sardonyx, sardius,  
 Chrysolite, beryl, topaz, chrysoptase,  
 Jacynth, and amethyst — and those twelve  
 gates,  
 Pearl — and I woke, and thought — death  
 — I shall die —  
 I am written in the Lamb's own Book of  
 Life  
 To walk within the glory of the Lord  
 Sunless and moonless, utter light — but  
 no!  
 The Lord had sent this bright, strange  
 dream to me  
 To mind me of the secret vow I made  
 When Spain was waging war against the  
 Moor —  
 I strove myself with Spain against the  
 Moor.  
 There came two voices from the Sepul-  
 chre,  
 Two friars crying that if Spain should  
 oust  
 The Moslem from her limit, he, the fierce  
 Soldan of Egypt, would break down and  
 raze  
 The blessed tomb of Christ; whereon I  
 vow'd  
 That, if our Princes harken'd to my  
 prayer,  
 Whatever wealth I brought from that new  
 world  
 Should, in this old, be consecrate to lead  
 A new crusade against the Saracen,  
 And free the Holy Sepulchre from thrall.

Gold? I had brought your Princes  
 gold enough  
 If left alone! Being but a Genovese,  
 I am handled worse than had I been a  
 Moor,  
 And breach'd the belting wall of Cambalu,

And given the Great Khan's palaces to  
 the Moor,  
 Or clutch'd the sacred crown of Prester  
 John,  
 And cast it to the Moor: but *had* I  
 brought  
 From Solomon's now-recover'd Ophir all  
 The gold that Solomon's navies carried  
 home,  
 Would that have gilded *me*? Blue blood  
 of Spain,  
 Tho' quartering your own royal arms of  
 Spain,  
 I have not: blue blood and black blood  
 of Spain,  
 The noble and the convict of Castile,  
 Howl'd me from Hispaniola; for you  
 know  
 The flies at home, that ever swarm about  
 And cloud the highest heads, and mur-  
 mur down  
 Truth in the distance — these outbuzz'd  
 me so  
 That even our prudent king, our right-  
 eous queen —  
 I pray'd them being so calumniated  
 They would commission one of weight  
 and worth  
 To judge between my slander'd self and  
 me —  
 Fonseca my main enemy at their court,  
 They sent me out *his* tool, Bovadilla, one  
 As ignorant and impolitic as a beast —  
 Blockish irreverence, brainless greed —  
 who sack'd  
 My dwelling, seized upon my papers,  
 loosed  
 My captives, fed the rebels of the crown,  
 Sold the crown-farms for all but nothing,  
 gave  
 All but free leave for all to work the  
 mines,  
 Drove me and my good brothers home  
 in chains,  
 And gathering ruthless gold — a single  
 piece  
 Weigh'd high four thousand Castellanos  
 — so  
 They tell me — weigh'd him down into  
 the abysm —  
 The hurricane of the latitude on him fell,  
 The seas of our discovering over-roll  
 Him and his gold; the frailer caravel,

With what was mine, came happily to  
the shore.

There was a glimmering of God's hand.

And God  
Hath more than glimmer'd on me. O  
my lord,

I swear to you I heard his voice between  
The thunders in the black Veragua nights,  
'O soul of little faith, slow to believe!

Have I not been about thee from thy  
birth?

Given thee the keys of the great Ocean-  
sea?

Set thee in light till time shall be no  
more?

Is it I who have deceived thee or the  
world?

Endure! thou hast done so well for men,  
that men

Cry out against thee: was it otherwise  
With mine own Son?'

And more than once in days  
Of doubt and cloud and storm, when  
drowning hope

Sank all but out of sight, I heard his  
voice,

'Be not cast down. I lead thee by the  
hand,

Fear not.' And I shall hear his voice  
again—

I know that he has led me all my life,  
I am not yet too old to work his will—

His voice again.

Still for all that, my lord,  
I lying here bedridden and alone,

Cast off, put by, scouted by court and  
king—

The first discoverer starves—his follow-  
ers, all

Flower into fortune—our world's way—  
and I,

Without a roof that I can call mine own,  
With scarce a coin to buy a meal withal,  
And seeing what a door for scoundrelscum

I open'd to the West, thro' which the lust,  
Villany, violence, avarice, of your Spain

Pour'd in on all those happy naked isles—  
Their kindly native princes slain or slaved,

Their wives and children Spanish concu-  
bines,

Their innocent hospitalities quench'd in  
blood,

Some dead of hunger, some beneath the  
scourge,

Some over-labour'd, some by their own  
hands,—

Yea, the dear mothers, crazing Nature,  
kill

Their babies at the breast for hate of  
Spain—

Ah God, the harmless people whom we  
found

In Hispaniola's island-Paradise!

Who took us for the very Gods from  
Heaven,

And we have sent them very fiends from  
Hell;

And I myself, myself not blameless, I  
Could sometimes wish I had never led  
the way.

Only the ghost of our great Catholic  
Queen

Smiles on me, saying, 'Be thou com-  
forted!

This creedless people will be brought to  
Christ

And own the holy governance of Rome.'

But who could dream that we, who bore  
the Cross

Thither, were excommunicated there,  
For curbing crimes that scandalised the  
Cross,

By him, the Catalonian Minorite,  
Rome's Vicar in our Indies? who believe

These hard memorials of our truth to  
Spain

Clung closer to us for a longer term  
Than any friend of ours at Court? and yet

Pardon—too harsh, unjust. I am rack'd  
with pains.

You see that I have hung them by my  
bed,

And I will have them buried in my grave.

Sir, in that flight of ages which are  
God's

Own voice to justify the dead—per-  
chance

Spain once the most chivalric race on  
earth,

Spain then the mightiest, wealthiest realm  
 on earth,  
 So made by me, may seek to unbury me,  
 To lay me in some shrine of this old  
 Spain,  
 Or in that vaster Spain I leave to Spain.  
 Then some one standing by my grave will  
 say,  
 'Behold the bones of Christopher  
 Colòn'—  
 'Ay, but the chains, what do *they* mean  
 — the chains?'—  
 I sorrow for that kindly child of Spain  
 Who then will have to answer, 'These  
 same chains  
 Bound these same bones back thro' the  
 Atlantic sea,  
 Which he unchain'd for all the world to  
 come.'

O Queen of Heaven who seest the souls  
 in Hell  
 And purgatory, I suffer all as much  
 As they do — for the moment. Stay, my  
 son  
 Is here anon: my son will speak for me  
 Ablier than I can in these spasms that  
 grind  
 Bone against bone. You will not. One  
 last word.

You move about the Court, I pray you  
 tell  
 King Ferdinand, who plays with me, that  
 one  
 Whose life has been no play with him and  
 his  
 Hidalgos — shipwrecks, famines, fevers,  
 fights,  
 Mutinies, treacheries — wink'd at, and  
 condoned —  
 That I am loyal to him till the death,  
 And ready — tho' our Holy Catholic  
 Queen,  
 Who fain had pledged her jewels on my  
 first voyage,  
 Whose hope was mine to spread the  
 Catholic faith,  
 Who wept with me when I return'd in  
 chains,  
 Who sits beside the blessed Virgin now,  
 To whom I send my prayer by night and  
 day —

She is gone — but you will tell the King,  
 that I,  
 Rack'd as I am with gout, and wrench'd  
 with pains  
 Gain'd in the service of His Highness, yet  
 Am ready to sail forth on one last voyage,  
 And readier, if the King would hear, to  
 lead  
 One last crusade against the Saracen,  
 And save the Holy Sepulchre from  
 thrall.

Going? I am old and slighted: you  
 have dared  
 Somewhat perhaps in coming? my poor  
 thanks!  
 I am but an alien and a Genovese.

### THE VOYAGE OF MAELDUNE.

(FOUNDED ON AN IRISH LEGEND.

A.D. 700.)

#### I.

I WAS the chief of the race — he had  
 stricken my father dead —  
 But I gather'd my fellows together, I  
 swore I would strike off his head.  
 Each of them look'd like a king, and was  
 noble in birth as in worth,  
 And each of them boasted he sprang from  
 the oldest race upon earth.  
 Each was as brave in the fight as the  
 bravest hero of song,  
 And each of them liefer had died than  
 have done one another a wrong.  
*He* lived on an isle in the ocean — we  
 sail'd on a Friday morn —  
 He that had slain my father the day  
 before I was born.

#### II.

And we came to the isle in the ocean,  
 and there on the shore was he.  
 But a sudden blast blew us out and away  
 thro' a boundless sea.

#### III.

And we came to the Silent Isle that we  
 never had touch'd at before,  
 Where a silent ocean always broke on a  
 silent shore,

And the brooks glitter'd on in the light  
without sound, and the long water-  
falls

Pour'd in a thunderless plunge to the base  
of the mountain walls,

And the poplar and cypress unshaken by  
storm flourish'd up beyond sight,

And the pine shot aloft from the crag to  
an unbelievable height,

And high in the heaven above it there  
flicker'd a songless lark,

And the cock couldn't crow, and the bull  
couldn't low, and the dog couldn't  
bark.

And round it we went, and thro' it, but  
never a murmur, a breath—

It was all of it fair as life, it was all of it  
quiet as death,

And we hated the beautiful Isle, for  
whenever we strove to speak

Our voices were thinner and fainter than  
any flittermouse-shriek;

And the men that were mighty of tongue  
and could raise such a battle-cry

That a hundred who heard it would rush  
on a thousand lances and die—

O they to be dumb'd by the charm!—so  
fluster'd with anger were they

They almost fell on each other; but after  
we sail'd away.

• IV.

And we came to the Isle of Shouting, we  
landed, a score of wild birds

Cried from the topmost summit with  
human voices and words;

Once in an hour they cried, and whenever  
their voices peal'd

The steer fell down at the plow and the  
harvest died from the field,

And the men dropt dead in the valleys  
and half of the cattle went lame,

And the roof sank in on the hearth, and  
the dwelling broke into flame;

And the shouting of these wild birds ran  
into the hearts of my crew,

Till they shouted along with the shouting  
and seized one another and slew;

But I drew them the one from the other;  
I saw that we could not stay,

And we left the dead to the birds and we  
sail'd with our wounded away.

v.

And we came to the Isle of Flowers:  
their breath met us out on the seas,

For the Spring and the middle Summer  
sat each on the lap of the breeze;

And the red passion-flower to the cliffs,  
and the dark-blue clematis, clung,

And starr'd with a myriad blossom the  
long convolvulus hung;

And the topmost spire of the mountain  
was lilies in lieu of snow,

And the lilies like glaciers winded down,  
running out below

Thro' the fire of the tulip and poppy, the  
blaze of gorse, and the blush

Of millions of roses that sprang without  
leaf or a thorn from the bush;

And the whole isle-side flashing down  
from the peak without ever a tree

Swept like a torrent of gems from the sky  
to the blue of the sea;

And we roll'd upon capes of crocus and  
vaunted our kith and our kin,

And we wallow'd in beds of lilies, and  
chanted the triumph of Finn,

Till each like a golden image was pollen'd  
from head to feet

And each was as dry as a cricket, with  
thirst in the middle-day heat.

Blossom and blossom, and promise of  
blossom, but never a fruit!

And we hated the Flowering Isle, as we  
hated the isle that was mute,

And we tore up the flowers by the million  
and flung them in bight and bay,

And we left but a naked rock, and in  
anger we sail'd away.

VI.

And we came to the Isle of Fruits: all  
round from the cliffs and the capes,

Purple or amber, dangled a hundred  
fathom of grapes,

And the warm melon lay like a little sun  
on the tawny sand,

And the fig ran up from the beach and  
rioted over the land,

And the mountain arose like a jewell'd  
throne thro' the fragrant air,

Glowing with all-colour'd plums and with  
golden masses of pear,

And the crimson and scarlet of berries  
 that flamed upon bine and vine,  
 But in every berry and fruit was the  
 poisonous pleasure of wine;  
 And the peak of the mountain was apples,  
 the hugest that ever were seen,  
 And they prest, as they grew, on each  
 other, with hardly a leaflet between,  
 And all of them redder than rosiest  
 health or than utterest shame,  
 And setting, when Even descended, the  
 very sunset aflame;  
 And we stay'd three days, and we gorged  
 and we madden'd, till every one  
 drew  
 His sword on his fellow to slay him, and  
 ever they struck and they slew;  
 And myself, I had eaten but sparingly, and  
 fought till I sunder'd the fray,  
 Then I bade them remember my father's  
 death, and we sail'd away.

## VII.

And we came to the Isle of Fire: we were  
 lured by the light from afar,  
 For the peak sent up one league of fire  
 to the Northern Star;  
 Lured by the glare and the blare, but  
 scarcely could stand upright,  
 For the whole isle shudder'd and shook  
 like a man in a mortal affright;  
 We were giddy besides with the fruits we  
 had gorged, and so crazed that at  
 last  
 There were some leap'd into the fire;  
 and away we sail'd, and we past  
 Over that undersea isle, where the water  
 is clearer than air:  
 Down we look'd: what a garden! O  
 bliss, what a Paradise there!  
 Towers of a happier time, low down in a  
 rainbow deep  
 Silent palaces, quiet fields of eternal sleep!  
 And three of the gentlest and best of my  
 people, whate'er I could say,  
 Plunged head down in the sea, and the  
 Paradise trembled away.

## VIII.

And we came to the Bounteous Isle, where  
 the heavens lean low on the land,  
 And ever at dawn from the cloud glitter'd  
 o'er us a sunbright hand,

Then it open'd and dropt at the side of  
 each man, as he rose from his rest,  
 Bread enough for his need till the labour-  
 less day dipt under the West;  
 And we wander'd about it and thro' it.  
 O never was time so good!  
 And we sang of the triumphs of Finn,  
 and the boast of our ancient blood,  
 And we gazed at the wandering wave as  
 we sat by the gurgle of springs,  
 And we chanted the songs of the Bards  
 and the glories of fairy kings;  
 But at length we began to be weary, to  
 sigh, and to stretch and yawn,  
 Till we hated the Bounteous Isle and the  
 sunbright hand of the dawn,  
 For there was not an enemy near, but the  
 whole green Isle was our own,  
 And we took to playing at ball, and we  
 took to throwing the stone,  
 And we took to playing at battle, but  
 that was a perilous play,  
 For the passion of battle was in us, we  
 slew and we sail'd away.

## IX.

And we past to the Isle of Witches and  
 heard their musical cry—  
 'Come to us, O come, come' in the  
 stormy red of a sky  
 Dashing the fires and the shadows of  
 dawn on the beautiful shapes,  
 For a wild witch naked as heaven stood  
 on each of the loftiest capes,  
 And a hundred ranged on the rock like  
 white sea-birds in a row,  
 And a hundred gamboll'd and pranced  
 on the wrecks in the sand below,  
 And a hundred splash'd from the ledges,  
 and bosom'd the burst of the spray,  
 But I knew we should fall on each other,  
 and hastily sail'd away.

## X.

And we came in an evil time to the Isle  
 of the Double Towers,  
 One was of smooth-cut stone, one carved  
 all over with flowers,  
 But an earthquake always moved in the  
 hollows under the dells,  
 And they shock'd on each other and  
 butted each other with clashing  
 of bells,



And the daws flew out of the Towers and  
 jangled and wrangled in vain,  
 And the clash and boom of the bells rang  
 into the heart and the brain,  
 Till the passion of battle was on us, and  
 all took sides with the Towers,  
 There were some for the clean-cut stone,  
 there were more for the carven  
 flowers,  
 And the wrathful thunder of God peal'd  
 over us all the day,  
 For the one half slew the other, and after  
 we sail'd away.

## XI.

And we came to the Isle of a Saint who  
 had sail'd with St. Brendan of  
 yore,  
 He had lived ever since on the Isle and  
 his winters were fifteen score,  
 And his voice was low as from other  
 worlds, and his eyes were sweet,  
 And his white hair sank to his heels and  
 his white beard fell to his feet,  
 And he spake to me, 'O Maeldune, let  
 be this purpose of thine!  
 Remember the words of the Lord when  
 he told us "Vengeance is mine!"  
 His fathers have slain thy fathers in war  
 or in single strife,  
 Thy fathers have slain his fathers, each  
 taken a life for a life,  
 Thy father had slain his father, how long  
 shall the murder last?  
 Go back to the Isle of Finn and suffer  
 the Past to be Past.'  
 And we kiss'd the fringe of his beard and  
 we pray'd as we heard him pray,  
 And the Holy man he assoil'd us, and  
 sadly we sail'd away.

## XII.

And we came to the Isle we were blown  
 from, and there on the shore was  
 he,  
 The man that had slain my father. I  
 saw him and let him be.  
 O weary was I of the travel, the trouble,  
 the strife and the sin,  
 When I landed again, with a tithe of my  
 men, on the Isle of Finn.

## DE PROFUNDIS:

## THE TWO GREETINGS.

## I.

OUT of the deep, my child, out of the  
 deep,  
 Where all that was to be, in all that was,  
 Whirl'd for a million æons thro' the vast  
 Waste dawn of multitudinous-eddying  
 light —  
 Out of the deep, my child, out of the  
 deep,  
 Thro' all this changing world of change-  
 less law,  
 And every phase of ever-heightening life,  
 And nine long months of antenatal gloom,  
 With this last moon, this crescent — her  
 dark orb  
 Touch'd with earth's light — thou comest,  
 darling boy;  
 Our own; a babe in lineament and limb  
 Perfect, and prophet of the perfect man;  
 Whose face and form are hers and mine  
 in one,  
 Indissolubly married like our love;  
 Live, and be happy in thyself, and serve  
 This mortal race thy kin so well, that men  
 May bless thee as we bless thee, O young  
 life  
 Breaking with laughter from the dark;  
 and may  
 The fated channel where thy motion lives  
 Be prosperously shaped, and sway thy  
 course'  
 Along the years of haste and random  
 youth  
 Unshatter'd; then full-current thro' full  
 man;  
 And last in kindly curves, with gentlest  
 fall,  
 By quiet fields, a slowly-dying power,  
 To that last deep where we and thou are  
 still.

## II.

## I.

OUT of the deep, my child, out of the  
 deep,  
 From that great deep, before our world  
 begins,

Whereon the Spirit of God moves as he  
will —

Out of the deep, my child, out of the  
deep,

From that true world within the world  
we see,

Whereof our world is but the bounding  
shore —

Out of the deep, Spirit, out of the  
deep,

With this ninth moon, that sends the  
hidden sun

Down yon dark sea, thou comest, darling  
boy.

## II.

For in the world, which is not ours, They  
said

'Let us make man' and that which  
should be man,

From that one light no man can look  
upon,

Drew to this shore lit by the suns and  
moons

And all the shadows. O dear Spirit  
half-lost

In thine own shadow and this fleshly  
sign

That thou art thou — who wailest being  
born

And banish'd into mystery, and the pain  
Of this divisible-indivisible world

Among the numerable-innumerable  
Sun, sun, and sun, thro' finite-infinite  
space

In finite-infinite Time — our mortal veil  
And shatter'd phantom of that infinite

One,  
Who made thee unconceivably Thyself

Out of His whole World-self and all in  
all —

Live thou! and of the grain and husk,  
the grape

And ivyberry, choose; and still depart  
From death to death thro' life and life,  
and find

Nearer and ever nearer Him, who  
wrought

Not Matter, nor the finite-infinite,  
But this main-miracle, that thou art

thou,  
With power on thine own act and on the  
world.

## THE HUMAN CRY.

## I.

HALLOWED be Thy name—Halleluiah!—  
Infinite Ideality!

Immeasurable Reality!

Infinite Personality!

Hallowed be Thy name — Halleluiah!

## II.

We feel we are nothing — for all is Thou  
and in Thee;

We feel we are something — *that* also has  
come from Thee;

We know we are nothing — but Thou  
wilt help us to be.

Hallowed be Thy name — Halleluiah!

## PREFATORY SONNET

TO THE 'NINETEENTH CENTURY.'

THOSE that of late had fled to far and  
fast

To touch all shores, now leaving to the  
skill

Of others their old craft seaworthy still,  
Have charter'd this; where, mindful of

the past,  
Our true co-mates regather round the

mast;  
Of diverse tongue, but with a common will  
Here, in this roaring moon of daffodil

And crocus, to put forth and brave the  
blast;

For some, descending from the sacred  
peak

Of hoar high-templed Faith, have leagued  
again

Their lot with ours to rove the world  
about;

And some are wilder comrades, sworn to  
seek

If any golden harbour be for men  
In seas of Death and sunless gulfs of  
Doubt.

TO THE REV. W. H. BROOKFIELD.

BROOKS, for they call'd you so that knew  
you best,

Old Brooks, who loved so well to mouth  
my rhymes,

How oft we two have heard St. Mary's  
 chimes!  
 How oft the Cantab supper, host and  
 guest,  
 Would echo helpless laughter to your jest!  
 How oft with him we paced that walk of  
 limes,  
 Him, the lost light of those dawn-golden  
 times,  
 Who loved you well! Now both are gone  
 to rest.  
 You man of humorous-melancholy mark,  
 Dead of some inward agony — is it so?  
 Our kindlier, trustier Jaques, past away!  
 I cannot laud this life, it looks so dark:  
 Σκιάς ὄναρ — dream of a shadow, go —  
 God bless you. I shall join you in a day.

## MONTENEGRO.

THEY rose to where their sovran eagle sails,  
 They kept their faith, their freedom, on  
 the height,  
 Chaste, frugal, savage, arm'd by day and  
 night  
 Against the Turk; whose inroad nowhere  
 scales  
 Their headlong passes, but his footstep  
 fails,  
 And red with blood the Crescent reels  
 from fight  
 Before their dauntless hundreds, in prone  
 flight  
 By thousands down the crags and thro'  
 the vales.  
 O smallest among peoples! rough rock-  
 throne

Of Freedom! warriors beating back the  
 swarm  
 Of Turkish Islam for five hundred years,  
 Great Tsernogora! never since thine  
 own  
 Black ridges drew the cloud and brake  
 the storm  
 Has breathed a race of mightier moun-  
 taineers.

## TO VICTOR HUGO.

VICTOR in Drama, Victor in Romance,  
 Cloud-weaver of phantasmal hopes and  
 fears,  
 French of the French, and Lord of hu-  
 man tears;  
 Child-lover; Bard whose fame-lit laurels  
 glance  
 Darkening the wreaths of all that would  
 advance,  
 Beyond our strait, their claim to be thy  
 peers;  
 Weird Titan by thy winter weight of  
 years  
 As yet unbroken, Stormy voice of  
 France!  
 Who dost not love our England — so  
 they say;  
 I know not — England, France, all man  
 to be  
 Will make one people ere man's race be  
 run:  
 And I, desiring that diviner day,  
 Yield thee full thanks for thy full  
 courtesy  
 To younger England in the boy my son.

## TRANSLATIONS, ETC.

## BATTLE OF BRUNANBURH.

Constantinus, King of the Scots, after having  
 sworn allegiance to Athelstan, allied himself with  
 the Danes of Ireland under Anlaf, and invading  
 England, was defeated by Athelstan and his  
 brother Edmund with great slaughter at Brunan-  
 burh in the year 937.

## I.

<sup>1</sup> ATHELSTAN King,  
 Lord among Earls,

Bracelet-bestower and  
 Baron of Barons,  
 He with his brother,  
 Edmund Atheling,  
 Gaining a lifelong  
 Glory in battle,  
 Slew with the sword-edge  
 There by Brunanburh,

<sup>1</sup> I have more or less availed myself of my  
 son's prose translation of this poem in the *Con-  
 temporary Review* (November 1876).

Brake the shield-wall,  
 Hew'd the lindenwood,<sup>1</sup>  
 Hack'd the battleshield,  
 Sons of Edward with hammer'd brands.

## II.

Theirs was a greatness  
 Got from their Grandsires —  
 Theirs that so often in  
 Strife with their enemies  
 Struck for their hoards and their hearths  
 and their homes.

## III.

Bow'd the spoiler,  
 Bent the Scotsman,  
 Fell the shipcrews  
 Doom'd to the death.  
 All the field with blood of the fighters  
 Flow'd, from when first the great  
 Sun-star' of morningtide,  
 Lamp of the Lord God  
 Lord everlasting,  
 Glode over earth till the glorious creature  
 Sank to his setting.

## IV.

There lay many a man  
 Marr'd by the javelin,  
 Men of the Northland  
 Shot over shield.  
 There was the Scotsman  
 Weary of war.

## V.

We the West-Saxons,  
 Long as the daylight  
 Lasted, in companies  
 Troubled the track of the host that we  
 hated,  
 Grimly with swords that were sharp from  
 the grindstone,  
 Fiercely we hack'd at the flyers before  
 us.

## VI.

Mighty the Mercian,  
 Hard was his hand-play,  
 Sparing not any of  
 Those that with Anlaf,

<sup>1</sup> Shields of lindenwood.

Warriors over the  
 Weltering waters  
 Borne in the bark's-bosom,  
 Drew to this island:  
 Doom'd to the death.

## VII.

Five young kings put asleep by the sword-  
 stroke,  
 Seven strong Earls of the army of Anlaf  
 Fell on the war-field, numberless numbers,  
 Shipmen and Scotsmen.

## VIII.

Then the Norse leader,  
 Dire was his need of it,  
 Few were his following,  
 Fled to his warship:  
 Fleeted his vessel to sea with the king  
 in it,  
 Saving his life on the fallow flood.

## IX.

Also the crafty one,  
 Constantinus,  
 Crept to his North again,  
 Hoar-headed hero!

## X.

Slender warrant had  
*He* to be proud of  
 The welcome of war-knives —  
 He that was reft of his  
 Folk and his friends that had  
 Fallen in conflict,  
 Leaving his son too  
 Lost in the carnage,  
 Mangled to morsels,  
 A youngster in war!

## XI.

Slender reason had  
*He* to be glad of  
 The clash of the war-glaive —  
 Traitor and trickster  
 And spurner of treaties —  
 He nor had Anlaf  
 With armies so broken  
 A reason for bragging  
 That they had the better  
 In perils of battle

On places of slaughter —  
 The struggle of standards,  
 The rush of the javelins,  
 The crash of the charges,<sup>1</sup>  
 The wielding of weapons —  
 The play that they play'd with  
 The children of Edward.

## XII.

Then with their nail'd prows  
 Parted the Norsemen, a  
 Blood-redden'd relic of  
 Javelins over  
 The jarring breaker, the deep-  
     sea billow,  
 Shaping their way toward Dy-  
     flen<sup>2</sup> again.  
 Shamed in their souls.

## XIII.

Also the brethren,  
 King and Atheling,  
 Each in his glory,  
 Went to his own in his own West-Saxon-  
     land,  
 Glad of the war.

## XIV.

Many a carcase they left to be carrion,  
 Many a livid one, many a fallow-skin —  
 Left for the white-tail'd eagle to tear it,  
     and  
 Left for the horny-nibb'd raven to rend  
     it, and  
 Gave to the garbaging war-hawk to gorge  
     it, and  
 That gray beast, the wolf of the weald.

## XV.

Never had huger  
 Slaughter of heroes  
 Slain by the sword-edge —  
 Such as old writers  
 Have writ of in histories —  
 Hapt in this isle, since  
 Up from the East hither  
 Saxon and Angle from  
 Over the broad billow  
 Broke into Britain with  
 Haughty war-workers who

Harried the Welshman, when  
 Earls that were lured by the  
 Hunger of glory gat  
 Hold of the land.

## ACHILLES OVER THE TRENCH.

## ILIAD, xviii, 202.

So saying, light-foot Iris pass'd away.  
 Then rose Achilles dear to Zeus; and  
     round -  
 The warrior's puissant shoulders Pallas  
     flung  
 Her fringed ægis, and around his head  
 The glorious goddess wreath'd a golden  
     cloud,  
 And from it lighted an all-shining flame.  
 As when a smoke from a city goes to  
     heaven  
 Far off from out an island girt by foes,  
 All day the men contend in grievous  
     war  
 From their own city, but with set of  
     sun  
 Their fires flame thickly, and aloft the  
     glare  
 Flies streaming, if perchance the neigh-  
     bours round  
 May see, and sail to help them in the  
     war;  
 So from his head the splendour went to  
     heaven.  
 From wall to dyke he stept, he stood,  
     nor join'd  
 The Achæans — honouring his wise  
     mother's word —  
 There standing, shouted, and Pallas far  
     away  
 Call'd; and a boundless panic shook the  
     foe.  
 For like the clear voice when a trumpet  
     shrills,  
 Blown by the fierce beleaguers of a  
     town,  
 So rang the clear voice of Æakidês;  
 And when the brazen cry of Æakidês  
 Was heard among the Trojans, all their  
     hearts  
 Were troubled, and the full-maned horses  
     whirl'd  
 The chariots backward, knowing griefs  
     at hand;

<sup>1</sup> Lit. 'the gathering of men.'   <sup>2</sup> Dublin.

And sheer-astounded were the chariot-  
eers  
To see the dread, unwearable fire  
That always o'er the great Pelcion's  
head  
Burn'd, for the bright-eyed goddess made  
it burn.  
Thrice from the dyke he sent his mighty  
shout,  
Thrice backward reel'd the Trojans and  
allies;  
And there and then twelve of their noblest  
died  
Among their spears and chariots.

TO PRINCESS FREDERICA ON  
HER MARRIAGE.

O YOU that were eyes and light to the  
King till he past away  
From the darkness of life —  
He saw not his daughter — he blest her :  
the blind King sees you to-day,  
He blesses the wife.

SIR JOHN FRANKLIN.

ON THE CENOTAPH IN WESTMINSTER  
ABBEY.

NOT here! the white North has thy  
bones; and thou,  
Heroic sailor-soul,  
Art passing on thine happier voyage now  
Toward no earthly pole.

TO DANTE.

(WRITTEN AT REQUEST OF THE  
FLORENTINES.)

KING, that hast reign'd six hundred years,  
and grown  
In power, and ever growest, since thine  
own  
Fair Florence honouring thy nativity,  
Thy Florence now the crown of Italy,  
Hath sought the tribute of a verse from  
me,  
I, wearing but the garland of a day,  
Cast at thy feet one flower that fades  
away.

TIRESIAS

AND OTHER POEMS.

TO E. FITZGERALD.

OLD FITZ, who from your suburb grange,  
Where once I tarried for a while,  
Glance at the wheeling Orb of change,  
And greet it with a kindly smile;  
Whom yet I see as there you sit  
Beneath your sheltering garden-tree,  
And while your doves about you flit,  
And plant on shoulder, hand and knee,  
Or on your head their rosy feet,  
As if they knew your diet spares  
Whatever moved in that full sheet  
Let down to Peter at his prayers;  
Who live on milk and meal and grass;  
And once for ten long weeks I tried  
Your table of Pythagoras,  
And seem'd at first 'a thing enskied'  
(As Shakespeare has it) airy-light  
To float above the ways of men,  
Then fell from that half-spiritual height  
Chill'd, till I tasted flesh again

One night when earth was winter-black,  
And all the heavens flash'd in frost;  
And on me, half-asleep, came back  
That wholesome heat the blood had lost,  
And set me climbing icy capes  
And glaciers, over which there roll'd  
To meet me long-arm'd vines with grapes  
Of Eshcol hugeness; for the cold  
Without, and warmth within me, wrought  
To mould the dream; but none can say  
That Lenten fare makes Lenten thought,  
Who reads your golden Eastern lay,  
Than which I know no version done  
In English more divinely well;  
A planet equal to the sun  
Which cast it, that large infidel  
Your Omar; and your Omar drew  
Full-handed plaudits from our best  
In modern letters, and from two,  
Old friends outvaluing all the rest,  
Two voices heard on earth no more;  
But we old friends are still alive,



And I am nearing seventy-four,  
 While you have touch'd at seventy-  
 five,  
 And so I send a birthday line  
 Of greeting; and my son, who dipt  
 In some forgotten book of mine  
 With sallow scraps of manuscript,  
 And dating many a year ago,  
 Has hit on this, which you will take  
 My Fitz, and welcome, as I know  
 Less for its own than for the sake  
 Of one recalling gracious times,  
 When, in our younger London days,  
 You found some merit in my rhymes,  
 And I more pleasure in your praise.

## TIRESIAS.

I WISH I were as in the years of old,  
 While yet the blessed daylight made itself  
 Ruddy thro' both the roofs of sight, and  
 woke  
 These eyes, now dull, but then so keen  
 to seek  
 The meanings ambush'd under all they  
 saw,  
 The flight of birds, the flame of sacrifice,  
 What omens may foreshadow fate to man  
 And woman, and the secret of the Gods.  
 My son, the Gods, despite of human  
 prayer,  
 Are slower to forgive than human kings.  
 The great God, Arês, burns in anger still  
 Against the guiltless heirs of him from  
 Tyre,  
 Our Cadmus, out of whom thou art,  
 who found  
 Beside the springs of Dircê, smote, and  
 still'd  
 Thro' all its folds the multitudinous  
 beast,  
 The dragon, which our trembling fathers  
 call'd  
 The God's own son.  
 A tale, that told to me,  
 When but thine age, by age as winter-  
 white  
 As mine is now, amazed, but made me  
 yearn  
 For larger glimpses of that more than  
 man  
 Which rolls the heavens, and lifts, and  
 lays the deep,

Yet loves and hates with mortal hates  
 and loves,  
 And moves unseen among the ways of  
 men.  
 Then, in my wanderings all the lands  
 that lie  
 Subjected to the Heliconian ridge  
 Have heard this footstep fall, altho' my  
 wont  
 Was more to scale the highest of the  
 heights  
 With some strange hope to see the nearer  
 God.  
 One naked peak—the sister of the  
 sun  
 Would climb from out the dark, and  
 linger there  
 To silver all the valleys with her shafts—  
 There once, but long ago, five-fold thy  
 term  
 Of years, I lay; the winds were dead  
 for heat;  
 The noonday crag made the hand burn;  
 and sick  
 For shadow—not one bush was near—  
 I rose  
 Following a torrent till its myriad falls  
 Found silence in the hollows under-  
 neath.  
 There in a secret olive-glade I saw  
 Pallas Athene climbing from the bath  
 In anger; yet one glittering foot disturb'd  
 The lucid well; one snowy knee was  
 prest  
 Against the margin flowers; a dreadful  
 light  
 Came from her golden hair, her golden  
 helm  
 And all her golden armour on the grass,  
 And from her virgin breast, and virgin  
 eyes  
 Remaining fixt on mine, till mine grew  
 dark  
 For ever, and I heard a voice that said  
 'Henceforth be blind, for thou hast seen  
 too much,  
 And speak the truth that no man may  
 believe.'  
 Son, in the hidden world of sight, that  
 lives  
 Behind this darkness, I behold her still,  
 Beyond all work of those who carve the  
 stone,

Beyond all dreams of Godlike woman-  
hood,  
Ineffable beauty, out of whom, at a  
glance,  
And as it were, perforce, upon me flash'd  
The power of prophesying — but to me  
No power — so chain'd and coupled with  
the curse  
Of blindness and their unbelief, who  
heard  
And heard not, when I spake of famine,  
plague,  
Shrine-shattering earthquake, fire, flood,  
thunderbolt,  
And angers of the Gods for evil done  
And expiation lack'd — no power on Fate,  
Theirs, or mine own! for when the  
crowd would roar  
For blood, for war, whose issue was their  
doom,  
To cast wise words among the multitude  
Was flinging fruit to lions; nor, in hours  
Of civil outbreak, when I knew the twain  
Would each waste each, and bring on  
both the yoke  
Of stronger states, was mine the voice to  
curb  
The madness of our cities and their kings.  
Who ever turn'd upon his heel to hear  
My warning that the tyranny of one  
Was prelude to the tyranny of all?  
My counsel that the tyranny of all  
Led backward to the tyranny of one?  
This power hath work'd no good to  
aught that lives,  
And these blind hands were useless in  
their wars.  
O therefore that the unfulfill'd desire,  
The grief for ever born from griefs to be,  
The boundless yearning of the Prophet's  
heart —  
Could *that* stand forth, and, like a statue  
rear'd  
To some great citizen, win all praise  
from all  
Who past it, saying, 'That was he!'  
In vain!  
Virtue must shape itself in deed, and those  
Whom weakness or necessity have  
cramp'd  
Within themselves, immersing, each, his  
urn  
In his own well, draw solace as he may.

Meneceus, thou hast eyes, and I can  
hear  
Too plainly what full tides of onset sap  
Our seven high gates, and what a weight  
of war  
Rides on those ringing axles! jingle of  
bits,  
Shouts, arrows, tramp of the hornfooted  
horse  
That grind the glebe to powder! Stony  
showers  
Of that ear-stunning hail of Arês crash  
Along the sounding walls. Above,  
below,  
Shock after shock, the song-built towers  
and gates  
Reel, bruised and butted with the  
shuddering  
War-thunder of iron rams; and from  
within  
The city comes a murmur void of joy,  
Lest she be taken captive — maidens,  
wives,  
And mothers with their babblers of the  
dawn,  
And oldest age in shadow from the night,  
Falling about their shrines before their  
Gods,  
And wailing 'Save us.'  
And they wail to thee!  
These eyeless eyes, that cannot see thine  
own,  
See this, that only in thy virtue lies  
The saving of our Thebes; for, yester-  
night,  
To me, the great God Arês, whose one  
bliss  
Is war, and human sacrifice — himself  
Blood-red from battle, spear and helmet  
tipt  
With storied light as on a mast at sea,  
Stood out before a darkness, crying  
'Thebes,  
Thy Thebes shall fall and perish, for I  
loathe  
The seed of Cadmus — yet if one of these  
By his own hand — if one of these —'  
My son,  
No sound is breathed so potent to  
coerce,  
And to conciliate, as their names who dare  
For that sweet mother land which gave  
them birth

Nobly to do, nobly to die. Their names,  
Graven on memorial columns, are a song  
Heard in the future; few, but more than  
wall

And rampart, their examples reach a  
hand

Far thro' all years, and everywhere they  
meet

And kindle generous purpose, and the  
strength

To mould it into action pure as theirs.

Fairer thy fate than mine, if life's best  
end

Be to end well! and thou refusing this,  
Unvenerable will thy memory be  
While men shall move the lips: but if  
thou dare —

Thou, one of these, the race of Cadmus  
— then

No stone is fitted in yon marble girth  
Whose echo shall not tongue thy glorious  
doom,

Nor in this pavement but shall ring thy  
name

To every hoof that clangs it, and the  
springs

Of Dircê laving yonder battle-plain,  
Heard from the roofs by night, will mur-  
mur thee

To thine own Thebes, while Thebes thro'  
thee shall stand

Firm-based with all her Gods.

The Dragon's cave

Half-hid, they tell me, now in flowing  
vines —

Where once he dwelt and whence he  
roll'd himself

At dead of night — thou knowest, and  
that smooth rock

Before it, altar-fashion'd, where of late  
The woman-breasted Sphinx, with wings  
drawn back,

Folded her lion paws, and look'd to  
Thebes.

There blanch the bones of whom she  
slew, and these

Mixt with her own, because the fierce  
beast found

A wiser than herself, and dash'd herself  
Dead in her rage: but thou art wise  
enough,

Tho' young, to love thy wiser, blunt the  
curse

Of Pallas, hear, and tho' I speak the  
truth

Believe I speak it, let thine own hand  
strike

Thy youthful pulses into rest and quench  
The red God's anger, fearing not to  
plunge

Thy torch of life in darkness, rather —  
thou

Rejoicing that the sun, the moon, the  
stars

Send no such light upon the ways of men  
As one great deed.

Thither, my son, and there

Thou, that hast never known the embrace  
of love,

Offer thy maiden life.

This useless hand!

I felt one warm tear fall upon it. Gone!  
He will achieve his greatness.

But for me,

I would that I were gather'd to my rest,  
And mingled with the famous kings of  
old,

On whom about their ocean-islets flash  
The faces of the Gods — the wise man's  
word,

Here trampled by the populace under-  
foot,

There crown'd with worship — and these  
eyes will find

The men I knew, and watch the chariot  
whirl

About the goal again, and hunters race  
The shadowy lion, and the warrior-  
kings,

In height and prowess more than human,  
strive

Again for glory, while the golden lyre  
Is ever sounding in heroic ears

Heroic hymns, and every way the vales  
Wind, clouded with the grateful incense-  
fume

Of those who mix all odour to the Gods  
On one far height in one far-shining fire.

‘One height and one far-shining fire,’

And while I fancied that my friend  
For this brief idyll would require

A less diffuse and opulent end,  
And would defend his judgment well,

If I should deem it over nice —

The tolling of his funeral bell  
 Broke on my Pagan Paradise,  
 And mixt the dream of classic times  
 And all the phantoms of the dream,  
 With present grief, and made the rhymes,  
 That miss'd his living welcome, seem  
 Like would-be guests an hour too late,  
 Who down the highway moving on  
 With easy laughter find the gate  
 Is bolted, and the master gone.  
 Gone into darkness, that full light  
 Of friendship! past, in sleep, away  
 By night, into the deeper night!  
 The deeper night? A clearer day  
 Than our poor twilight dawn on earth —  
 If night, what barren toil to be!  
 What life, so maim'd by night, were worth  
 Our living out? Not mine to me  
 Remembering all the golden hours  
 Now silent, and so many dead,  
 And him the last; and laying flowers,  
 This wreath, above his honour'd head,  
 And praying that, when I from hence  
 Shall fade with him into the unknown,  
 My close of earth's experience  
 May prove as peaceful as his own.

## THE WRECK.

## I.

HIDE me, Mother! my Fathers belong'd  
 to the church of old,  
 I am driven by storm and sin and death  
 to the ancient fold,  
 I cling to the Catholic Cross once more,  
 to the Faith that saves,  
 My brain is full of the crash of wrecks,  
 and the roar of waves,  
 My life itself is a wreck, I have sullied  
 a noble name,  
 I am flung from the rushing tide of the  
 world as a waif of shame,  
 I am roused by the wail of a child, and  
 awake to a livid light,  
 And a ghastlier face than ever has  
 haunted a grave by night,  
 I would hide from the storm without, I  
 would flee from the storm within,  
 I would make my life one prayer for a  
 soul that died in his sin,  
 I was the tempter, Mother, and mine was  
 the deeper fall;

I will sit at your feet, I will hide my face,  
 I will tell you all.

## II.

He that they gave me to, Mother, a  
 heedless and innocent bride —  
 I never have wrong'd his heart, I have  
 only wounded his pride —  
 Spain in his blood and the Jew — dark-  
 visaged, stately and tall —  
 A princelier-looking man never stept  
 thro' a Prince's hall.  
 And who, when his anger was kindled,  
 would venture to give him the nay?  
 And a man men fear is a man to be loved  
 by the women they say.  
 And I could have loved him too, if the  
 blossom can dote on the blight,  
 Or the young green leaf rejoice in the  
 frost that sears it at night;  
 He would open the books that I prized,  
 and toss them away with a yawn,  
 Repell'd by the magnet of Art to the  
 which my nature was drawn,  
 The word of the Poet by whom the deeps  
 of the world are stirr'd,  
 The music that robes it in language be-  
 neath and beyond the word!  
 My Shelley would fall from my hands when  
 he cast a contemptuous glance  
 From where he was poring over his  
 Tables of Trade and Finance;  
 My hands, when I heard him coming,  
 would drop from the chords or  
 the keys,  
 But ever I fail'd to please him, however  
 I strove to please —  
 All day long far-off in the cloud of the  
 city, and there  
 Lost, head and heart, in the chances of  
 dividend, consol, and share —  
 And at home if I sought for a kindly ca-  
 ress, being woman and weak,  
 His formal kiss fell chill as a flake of  
 snow on the cheek:  
 And so, when I bore him a girl, when I  
 held it aloft in my joy,  
 He look'd at it coldly, and said to me,  
 'Pity it isn't a boy.'  
 The one thing given me, to love and to  
 live for, glanced at in scorn!  
 The child that I felt I could die for — as  
 if she were basely born!

I had lived a wild-flower life, I was  
planted now in a tomb;  
The daisy will shut to the shadow, I closed  
my heart to the gloom;  
I threw myself all abroad — I would play  
my part with the young  
By the low foot-lights of the world — and  
I caught the wreath that was flung.

## III.

Mother, I have not — however their  
tongues may have babbled of me —  
Sinn'd thro' an animal vileness, for all  
but a dwarf was he,  
And all but a hunchback too; and I  
look'd at him, first, askance,  
With pity — not he the knight for an  
amorous girl's romance!  
Tho' wealthy enough to have bask'd in  
the light of a dowerless smile,  
Having lands at home and abroad in a  
rich West-Indian isle;  
But I came on him once at a ball, the  
heart of a listening crowd —  
Why, what a brow was there! he was  
seated — speaking aloud  
To women, the flower of the time, and  
men at the helm of state —  
Flowing with easy greatness and touch-  
ing on all things great,  
Science, philosophy, song — till I felt  
myself ready to weep  
For I knew not what, when I heard that  
voice, — as mellow and deep  
As a psalm by a mighty master and  
peal'd from an organ, — roll  
Rising and falling — for, Mother, the voice  
was the voice of the soul;  
And the sun of the soul made day in the  
dark of his wonderful eyes.  
Here was the hand that would help me,  
would heal me — the heart that  
was wise!  
And he, poor man, when he learnt that  
I hated the ring I wore,  
He helpt me with death, and he heal'd  
me with sorrow for evermore.

## IV.

For I broke the bond. That day my  
nurse had brought me the child.  
The small sweet face was flush'd, but it  
coo'd to the Mother and smiled.

'Anything ailing,' I ask'd her, 'with  
baby?' She shook her head,  
And the Motherless Mother kiss'd it, and  
turn'd in her haste and fled.

## V.

Low warm winds had gently breathed us  
away from the land —  
Ten long sweet summer days upon deck,  
sitting hand in hand —  
When he clothed a naked mind with the  
wisdom and wealth of his own,  
And I bow'd myself down as a slave to  
his intellectual throne,  
When he coin'd into English gold some  
treasure of classical song,  
When he flouted a statesman's error, or  
flamed at a public wrong,  
When he rose as it were on the wings of  
an eagle beyond me, and past  
Over the range and the change of the  
world from the first to the last,  
When he spoke of his tropical home in  
the canes by the purple tide,  
And the high star-crowns of his palms  
on the deep-wooded mountain-  
side,  
And cliffs all robed in lianas that dropt  
to the brink of his bay,  
And trees like the towers of a minster,  
the sons of a winterless day.  
'Paradise there!' so he said, but I seem'd  
in Paradise then  
With the first great love I had felt for the  
first and greatest of men;  
Ten long days of summer and sin — if it  
must be so —  
But days of a larger light than I ever  
again shall know —  
Days that will glimmer, I fear, thro' life  
to my latest breath;  
'No frost there,' so he said, 'as in truest  
Love no Death.'

## VI.

Mother, one morning a bird with a warble  
plaintively sweet  
Perch'd on the shrouds, and then fell  
fluttering down at my feet;  
I took it, he made it a cage, we fondled  
it, Stephen and I,  
But it died, and I thought of the child  
for a moment, I scarce know why.

## VII.

But if sin be sin, not inherited fate, as  
 many will say,  
 My sin to my desolate little one found  
 me at sea on a day,  
 When her orphan wail came borne in the  
 shriek of a growing wind,  
 And a voice rang out in the thunders of  
 Ocean and Heaven 'Thou hast  
 sinn'd.'  
 And down in the cabin were we, for the  
 towering crest of the tides  
 Plunged on the vessel and swept in a  
 cataract off from her sides,  
 And ever the great storm grew with a  
 howl and a hoot of the blast  
 In the rigging, voices of hell — then came  
 the crash of the mast.  
 'The wages of sin is death,' and there I  
 began to weep,  
 'I am the Jonah, the crew should cast  
 me into the deep,  
 For ah God, what a heart was mine to  
 forsake her even for you.'  
 'Never the heart among women,' he said,  
 'more tender and true.'  
 'The heart! not a mother's heart, when  
 I left my darling alone.'  
 'Comfort yourself, for the heart of the  
 father will care for his own.'  
 'The heart of the father will spurn her,'  
 I cried, 'for the sin of the wife,  
 The cloud of the mother's shame will  
 enfold her and darken her life.'  
 Then his pale face twitch'd; 'O Stephen,  
 I love you, I love you, and yet' —  
 As I lean'd away from his arms — 'would  
 God, we had never met!'  
 And he spoke not — only the storm; till  
 after a little, I yearn'd  
 For his voice again, and he call'd to me  
 'Kiss me!' and there — as I  
 turn'd —  
 'The heart, the heart!' I kiss'd him, I  
 clung to the sinking form,  
 And the storm went roaring above us,  
 and he — was out of the storm.

## VIII.

And then, then, Mother, the ship stag-  
 ger'd under a thunderous shock,  
 That shook us asunder, as if she had  
 struck and crash'd on a rock;

For a huge sea smote every soul from the  
 decks of The Falcon but one;  
 All of them, all but the man that was  
 lash'd to the helm had gone;  
 And I fell — and the storm and the days  
 went by, but I knew no more —  
 Lost myself — lay like the dead by the  
 dead on the cabin floor,  
 Dead to the death beside me, and lost to  
 the loss that was mine,  
 With a dim dream, now and then, of a  
 hand giving bread and wine,  
 Till I woke from the trance, and the ship  
 stood still, and the skies were blue,  
 But the face I had known, O Mother,  
 was not the face that I knew.

## IX.

The strange misfeaturing mask that I saw  
 so amazed me, that I  
 Stumbled on deck, half mad. I would  
 fling myself over and die!  
 But one — he was waving a flag — the one  
 man left on the wreck —  
 'Woman' — he graspt at my arm — 'stay  
 there' — I crouch'd upon deck —  
 'We are sinking, and yet there's hope:  
 look yonder,' he cried, 'a sail,'  
 In a tone so rough that I broke into  
 passionate tears, and the wail  
 Of a beaten babe, till I saw that a boat  
 was nearing us — then  
 All on a sudden I thought, I shall look  
 on the child again.

## X.

They lower'd me down the side, and  
 there in the boat I lay  
 With sad eyes fixt on the lost sea-home,  
 as we glided away,  
 And I sigh'd, as the low dark hull dipt  
 under the smiling main,  
 'Had I stay'd with *him*, I had now —  
 with *him* — been out of my pain.'

## XI.

They took us aboard: the crew were  
 gentle, the captain kind;  
 But I was the lonely slave of an often-  
 wandering mind;  
 For whenever a rougher gust might  
 tumble a stormier wave,



'O Stephen,' I moan'd, 'I am coming to thee in thine Ocean-grave.'  
And again, when a balmier breeze curl'd over a peacefuller sea,  
I found myself moaning again 'O child, I am coming to thee.'

## XII.

The broad white brow of the Isle — that bay with the colour'd sand —  
Rich was the rose of sunset there, as we drew to the land;  
All so quiet the ripple would hardly blanch into spray  
At the feet of the cliff; and I pray'd — 'my child' — for I still could pray —  
'May her life be as blissfully calm, be never gloom'd by the curse  
Of a sin, not hers!'

Was it well with the child?

I wrote to the nurse

Who had borne my flower on her hireling heart; and an answer came  
Not from the nurse — nor yet to the wife — to her maiden name!

I shook as I opened the letter — I knew that hand too well —

And from it a scrap, clipt out of the 'deaths' in a paper, fell.

'Ten long sweet summer days' of fever, and want of care!

And gone — that day of the storm — O Mother, she came to me there.

## DESPAIR.

A man and his wife having lost faith in a God, and hope of a life to come, and being utterly miserable in this, resolve to end themselves by drowning. The woman is drowned, but the man rescued by a minister of the sect he had abandoned.

## I.

Is it you, that preach'd in the chapel there looking over the sand?  
Follow'd us too that night, and dogg'd us, and drew me to land?

## II.

What did I feel that night? You are curious. How should I tell?

Does it matter so much what I felt?  
You rescued me — yet — was it well

That you came unwish'd for, uncall'd, between me and the deep and my doom,

Three days since, three more dark days of the Godless gloom

Of a life without sun, without health, without hope, without any delight

In anything here upon earth? but ah God, that night, that night

When the rolling eyes of the lighthouse there on the fatal neck

Of land running out into rock — they had saved many hundreds from wreck —

Glared on our way toward death, I remember I thought, as we past,

Does it matter how many they saved? we are all of us wreck'd at last —

'Do you fear?' and there came thro' the roar of the breaker a whisper, a breath,

'Fear? am I not with you? I am frighted at life not death.'

## III.

And the suns of the limitless Universe sparkled and shone in the sky,

Flashing with fires as of God, but we knew that their light was a lie —

Bright as with deathless hope — but, however they sparkled and shone,

The dark little worlds running round them were worlds of woe like our own —

No soul in the heaven above, no soul on the earth below,

A fiery scroll written over with lamentation and woe.

## IV.

See, we were nursed in the drear night-fold of your fatalist creed,

And we turn'd to the growing dawn, we had hoped for a dawn indeed,

When the light of a Sun that was coming would scatter the ghosts of the Past,

And the cramping creeds that had madden'd the peoples would vanish at last,

And we broke away from the Christ, our  
human brother and friend,  
For He spoke, or it seem'd that He  
spoke, of a Hell without help,  
without end.

## v.

Hoped for a dawn and it came, but the  
promise had faded away;  
We had past from a cheerless night to  
the glare of a drearier day;  
He is only a cloud and a smoke who was  
once a pillar of fire,  
The guess of a worm in the dust and the  
shadow of its desire —  
Of a worm as it writhes in a world of the  
weak trodden down by the strong,  
Of a dying worm in a world, all massacre,  
murder, and wrong.

## vi.

O we poor orphans of nothing — alone  
on that lonely shore —  
Born of the brainless Nature who knew  
not that which she bore!  
Trusting no longer that earthly flower  
would be heavenly fruit —  
Come from the brute, poor souls — no souls  
— and to die with the brute —

## vii.

Nay, but I am not claiming your pity: I  
know you of old —  
Small pity for those that have ranged from  
the narrow warmth of your fold,  
Where you bawl'd the dark side of your  
faith and a God of eternal rage,  
Till you flung us back on ourselves, and  
the human heart, and the Age.

## viii.

But pity — the Pagan held it a vice — was  
in her and in me,  
Helpless, taking the place of the pitying  
God that should be!  
Pity for all that aches in the grasp of an  
idiot power,  
And pity for our own selves on an earth  
that bore not a flower;  
Pity for all that suffers on land or in air  
or the deep,  
And pity for our own selves till we long'd  
for eternal sleep.

## ix.

'Lightly step over the sands! the waters  
— you hear them call!  
Life with its anguish, and horrors, and  
errors — away with it all!  
And she laid her hand in my own — she  
was always loyal and sweet —  
Till the points of the foam in the dusk  
came playing about our feet.  
*There* was a strong sea-current would  
sweep us out to the main.  
'Ah God' tho' I felt as I spoke I was  
taking the name in vain —  
'Ah God' and we turn'd to each other,  
we kiss'd, we embraced, she and I,  
Knowing the Love we were used to be-  
lieve everlasting would die:  
We had read their know-nothing books  
and we lean'd to the darker side —  
Ah God, should we find Him, perhaps,  
perhaps, if we died, if we died;  
We never had found Him on earth, this  
earth is a fatherless Hell —  
'Dear Love, for ever and ever, for ever  
and ever farewell,'  
Never a cry so desolate not since the  
world began,  
Never a kiss so sad, no, not since the  
coming of man!

## x.

But the blind wave cast me ashore, and  
you saved me, a valueless life.  
Not a grain of gratitude mine! You  
have parted the man from the wife.  
I am left alone on the land, she is all  
alone in the sea;  
If a curse meant aught, I would curse  
you for not having let me be.

## xi.

Visions of youth — for my brain was drunk  
with the water, it seems;  
I had past into perfect quiet at length  
out of pleasant dreams,  
And the transient trouble of drowning —  
what was it when match'd with  
the pains  
Of the hellish heat of a wretched life  
rushing back thro' the veins?

## XII.

Why should I live? one son had forged  
 on his father and fled,  
 And if I believed in a God, I would  
 thank him, the other is dead,  
 And there was a baby-girl, that had  
 never look'd on the light:  
 Happiest she of us all, for she past from  
 the night to the night.

## XIII.

But the crime, if a crime, of her eldest-  
 born, her glory, her boast,  
 Struck hard at the tender heart of the  
 mother, and broke it almost;  
 Tho', glory and shame dying out for ever  
 in endless time,  
 Does it matter so much whether crown'd  
 for a virtue, or hang'd for a crime?

## XIV.

And ruin'd by *him*, by *him*, I stood  
 there, naked, amazed  
 In a world of arrogant opulence, fear'd  
 myself turning crazed,  
 And I would not be mock'd in a mad-  
 house! and she, the delicate wife,  
 With a grief that could only be cured, if  
 cured, by the surgeon's knife, —

## XV.

Why should we bear with an hour of  
 torture, a moment of pain,  
 If every man die for ever, if all his griefs  
 are in vain,  
 And the homeless planet at length will  
 be wheel'd thro' the silence of  
 space,  
 Motherless evermore of an ever-vanishing  
 race,  
 When the worm shall have writhed its  
 last, and its last brother-worm  
 will have fled  
 From the dead fossil skull that is left in  
 the rocks of an earth that is dead?

## XVI.

Have I crazed myself over their horrible  
 infidel writings? O yes,  
 For these are the new dark ages, you see,  
 of the popular press,

When the bat comes out of his cave, and  
 the owls are whooping at noon,  
 And Doubt is the lord of this dunghill  
 and crows to the sun and the  
 moon,

Till the Sun and the Moon of our science  
 are both of them turn'd into blood,  
 And Hope will have broken her heart,  
 running after a shadow of good;  
 For their knowing and know-nothing  
 books are scatter'd from hand to  
 hand —

*We* have knelt in your know-all chapel  
 too looking over the sand.

## XVII.

What! I should call on that Infinite Love  
 that has served us so well?  
 Infinite cruelty rather that made everlast-  
 ing Hell,  
 Made us, foreknew us, foredoom'd us, and  
 does what he will with his own;  
 Better our dead brute mother who never  
 has heard us groan!

## XVIII.

Hell? if the souls of men were immortal,  
 as men have been told,  
 The lecher would cleave to his lusts, and  
 the miser would yearn for his gold,  
 And so there were Hell for ever! but  
 were there a God as you say,  
 His Love would have power over Hell  
 till it utterly vanish'd away.

## XIX.

Ah yet — I have had some glimmer, at  
 times, in my gloomiest woe,  
 Of a God behind all — after all — the great  
 God for aught that I know;  
 But the God of love and of Hell together  
 — they cannot be thought,  
 If there be such a God may the Great  
 God curse him and bring him to  
 naught!

## XX.

Blasphemy! whose is the fault? is it  
 mine? for why would you save  
 A madman to vex you with wretched  
 words, who is best in his grave?  
 Blasphemy! ay, why not, being damn'd  
 beyond hope of grace?

O would I were yonder with her, and  
away from your faith and your  
face!

Blasphemy! true! I have scared you  
pale with my scandalous talk,  
But the blasphemy to *my* mind lies all in  
the way that you walk.

## XXI.

Hence! she is gone! can I stay? can I  
breathe divorced from the Past?

You needs must have good lynx-eyes if I  
do not escape you at last.

Our orthodox coroner doubtless will find  
it a *felo-de-se*,

And the stake and the cross-road, fool,  
if you will, does it matter to me?

## THE ANCIENT SAGE.

A THOUSAND summers ere the time of  
Christ

From out his ancient city came a Seer  
Whom one that loved, and honour'd him,  
and yet

Was no disciple, richly garb'd, but worn  
From wasteful living, follow'd — in his  
hand

A scroll of verse — till that old man before  
A cavern whence an affluent fountain  
pour'd

From darkness into daylight, turn'd and  
spoke.

This wealth of waters might but seem to  
draw

From yon dark cave, but, son, the source  
is higher,

Yon summit half-a-league in air — and  
higher,

The cloud that hides it — higher still, the  
heavens

Whereby the cloud was moulded, and  
whereout

The cloud descended. Force is from the  
heights.

I am wearied of our city, son, and go  
To spend my one last year among the  
hills.

What hast thou there? Some deathsong  
for the Ghouls

To make their banquet relish? let me  
read.

“How far thro' all the bloom and brake  
That nightingale is heard!

What power but the bird's could make  
This summer in the bird?

How summer-bright are yonder skies,  
And earth as fair in hue!

And yet what sign of aught that lies  
Behind the green and blue?

But man to-day is fancy's fool  
As man hath ever been.

The nameless Power, or Powers, that rule  
Were never heard or seen.”

If thou would'st hear the Nameless, and  
wilt dive

Into the Temple-cave of thine own self,  
There, brooding by the central altar, thou  
May'st haply learn the Nameless hath a  
voice,

By which thou wilt abide, if thou be  
wise,

As if thou knewest, tho' thou canst not  
know;

For Knowledge is the swallow on the  
lake

That sees and stirs the surface-shadow  
there

But never yet hath dipt into the abysm,  
The Abysm of all Abysms, beneath,  
within

The blue of sky and sea, the green of  
earth,

And in the million-millionth of a grain  
Which cleft and cleft again for evermore,  
And ever vanishing, never vanishes,  
To me, my son, more mystic than myself,  
Or even than the Nameless is to me.

And when thou sendest thy free soul  
thro' heaven,

Nor understandest bound nor boundless-  
ness,

Thou seest the Nameless of the hundred  
names.

And if the Nameless should withdraw  
from all

Thy frailty counts most real, all thy world  
Might vanish like thy shadow in the dark.

“And since — from when this earth  
began —

The Nameless never came  
Among us, never spake with man,  
And never named the Name” —

Thou canst not prove the Nameless, O  
 my son,  
 Nor canst ihou prove the world thou  
 movest in,  
 Thou canst not prove that thou art body  
 alone,  
 Nor canst thou prove that thou art spirit  
 alone,  
 Nor canst thou prove that thou art both  
 in one:  
 Thou canst not prove thou art immortal, no  
 Nor yet that thou art mortal — nay, my  
 son,  
 Thou canst not prove that I, who speak  
 with thee,  
 Am not thyself in converse with thyself,  
 For nothing worthy proving can be  
 proven,  
 Nor yet disproven: wherefore thou be  
 wise,  
 Cleave ever to the sunnier side of doubt,  
 And cling to Faith beyond the forms of  
 Faith!  
 She reels not in the storm of warring  
 words,  
 She brightens at the clash of 'Yes' and  
 'No,'  
 She sees the Best that glimmers thro' the  
 Worst,  
 She feels the Sun is hid but for a night,  
 She spies the summer thro' the winter  
 bud,  
 She tastes the fruit before the blossom  
 falls,  
 She hears the lark within the songless  
 egg,  
 She finds the fountain where they wail'd  
 'Mirage'!

"What Power? aught akin to Mind,  
 The mind in me and you?  
 Or power as of the Gods gone blind  
 Who see not what they do?"

But some in yonder city hold, my son,  
 That none but Gods could build this  
 house of ours,  
 So beautiful, vast, various, so beyond  
 All work of man, yet, like all work of  
 man,  
 A beauty with defect — till That which  
 knows,

And is not known, but felt thro' what we  
 feel  
 Within ourselves is highest, shall descend  
 On this half-deed, and shape it at the  
 last  
 According to the Highest in the Highest.

"What Power but the Years that make  
 And break the vase of clay,  
 And stir the sleeping earth, and wake  
 The bloom that fades away?  
 What rulers but the Days and Hours  
 That cancel weal with woe,  
 And wind the front of youth with flowers,  
 And cap our age with snow?"

The days and hours are ever glancing  
 by,  
 And seem to flicker past thro' sun and  
 shade,  
 Or short, or long, as Pleasure leads, or  
 Pain;  
 But with the Nameless is nor Day nor  
 Hour;  
 Tho' we, thin minds, who creep from  
 thought to thought,  
 Break into 'Thens' and 'Whens' the  
 Eternal Now:  
 This double seeming of the single  
 world! —  
 My words are like the babblings in a  
 dream  
 Of nightmare, when the babblings break  
 the dream.  
 But thou be wise in this dream-world of  
 ours,  
 Nor take thy dial for thy deity,  
 But make the passing shadow serve thy  
 will.

"The years that made the stripling wise  
 Undo their work again,  
 And leave him, blind of heart and eyes,  
 The last and least of men;  
 Who clings to earth, and once would dare  
 Hell-heat or Arctic cold,  
 And now one breath of cooler air  
 Would loose him from his hold;  
 His winter chills him to the root,  
 He withers marrow and mind;  
 The kernel of the shrivell'd fruit  
 Is jutting thro' the rind;  
 The tiger spasms tear his chest,

The palsy wags his head;  
 The wife, the sons, who love him best  
 Would fain that he were dead;  
 The griefs by which he once was  
 wrung  
 Were never worth the while" —

Who knows? or whether this earth-narrow  
 life  
 Be yet but yolk, and forming in the shell?

"The shaft of scorn that once had stung  
 But wakes a dotard smile."

The placid gleam of sunset after storm!

"The statesman's brain that sway'd the  
 past

Is feebler than his knees;  
 The passive sailor wrecks at last  
 In ever-silent seas;  
 The warrior hath forgot his arms,  
 The Learned all his lore;  
 The changing market frets or charms  
 The merchant's hope no more;  
 The prophet's beacon burn'd in vain,  
 And now is lost in cloud;

The plowman passes, bent with pain,  
 To mix with what he plow'd;

The poet whom his Age would quote  
 As heir of endless fame —

He knows not ev'n the book he wrote,  
 Not even his own name.

For man has overlived his day,  
 And, darkening in the light,  
 Scarce feels the senses break away  
 To mix with ancient Night."

The shell must break before the bird can  
 fly.

"The years that when my Youth began  
 Had set the lily and rose

By all my ways where'er they ran,  
 Have ended mortal foes;  
 My rose of love for ever gone,  
 My lily of truth and trust —  
 They made her lily and rose in one,  
 And changed her into dust.

O rosetree planted in my grief,  
 And growing, on her tomb,  
 Her dust is greening in your leaf,  
 Her blood is in your bloom.

O slender lily waving there,  
 And laughing back the light,  
 In vain you tell me 'Earth is fair'  
 When all is dark as night."

My son, the world is dark with griefs and  
 graves,  
 So dark that men cry out against the  
 Heavens.

Who knows but that the darkness is in  
 man?

The doors of Night may be the gates of  
 Light;

For wert thou born or blind or deaf, and  
 then

Suddenly heal'd, how would'st thou glory  
 in all

The splendours and the voices of the  
 world!

And we, the poor earth's dying race, and  
 yet

No phantoms, watching from a phantom  
 shore

Await the last and largest sense to make  
 The phantom walls of this illusion fade,  
 And show us that the world is wholly fair.

"But vain the tears for darken'd years  
 As laughter over wine,  
 And vain the laughter as the tears,  
 O brother, mine or thine,

"For all that laugh, and all that weep,  
 And all that breathe are one  
 Slight ripple on the boundless deep  
 That moves, and all is gone."

But that one ripple on the boundless deep  
 Feels that the deep is boundless, and  
 itself

For ever changing form, but evermore  
 One with the boundless motion of the  
 deep.

"Yet wine and laughter friends! and set  
 The lamps alight, and call  
 For golden music, and forget  
 The darkness of the pall."

If utter darkness closed the day, my  
 son —  
 But earth's dark forehead flings athwart  
 the heavens



Her shadow crown'd with stars — and  
 yonder — out  
 To northward — some that never set, but  
 pass  
 From sight and night to lose themselves  
 in day.  
 I hate the black negation of the bier,  
 And wish the dead, as happier than our-  
 selves  
 And higher, having climb'd one step  
 beyond  
 Our village miseries, might be borne in  
 white  
 To burial or to burning, hymn'd from  
 hence  
 With songs in praise of death, and  
 crown'd with flowers!

“O worms and maggots of to-day  
 Without their hope of wings!”

But louder than thy rhyme the silent  
 Word  
 Of that world-prophet in the heart of man.

“Tho' some have gleams or so they say  
 Of more than mortal things.”

To-day? but what of yesterday? for oft  
 On me, when boy, there came what then  
 I call'd,  
 Who knew no books and no philosophies,  
 In my boy-phrase 'The Passion of the  
 Past.'  
 The first gray streak of earliest summer-  
 dawn,  
 The last long stripe of waning crimson  
 gloom,  
 As if the late and early were but one —  
 A height, a broken grange, a grove, a  
 flower  
 Had murmurs 'Lost and gone and lost  
 and gone!'  
 A breath, a whisper — some divine fare-  
 well —  
 Desolate sweetness — far and far away —  
 What had he loved, what had he lost,  
 the boy?  
 I know not and I speak of what has been.  
 And more, my son! for more than  
 once when I  
 Sat all alone, revolving in myself  
 The word that is the symbol of myself,

The mortal limit of the Self was loosed,  
 And past into the Nameless, as a cloud  
 Melts into Heaven. I touch'd my limbs,  
 the limbs  
 Were strange not mine — and yet no  
 shade of doubt,  
 But utter clearness, and thro' loss of Self  
 The gain of such large life as match'd  
 with ours  
 Were Sun to spark — unshadowable in  
 words,  
 Themselves but shadows of a shadow-  
 world.

“And idle gleams will come and go,  
 But still the clouds remain;”

The clouds themselves are children of the  
 Sun.

“And Night and Shadow rule below  
 When only Day should reign.”

And Day and Night are children of the  
 Sun,  
 And idle gleams to thee are light to me.  
 Some say, the Light was father of the  
 Night,  
 And some, the Night was father of the  
 Light,  
 No night no day! — I touch thy world  
 again —  
 No ill no good! such counter-terms, my  
 son,  
 Are border-races, holding, each its own  
 By endless war: but night enough is there  
 In yon dark city: get thee back: and  
 since  
 The key to that weird casket, which for  
 thee  
 But holds a skull, is neither thine nor  
 mine,  
 But in the hand of what is more than  
 man,  
 Or in man's hand when man is more than  
 man,  
 Let be thy wail and help thy fellow men,  
 And make thy gold thy vassal not thy  
 king,  
 And fling free alms into the beggar's  
 bowl,  
 And send the day into the darken'd  
 heart;

Nor list for guerdon in the voice of men,  
 A dying echo from a falling wall;  
 Nor care — for Hunger hath the Evil  
 eye —  
 To vex the noon with fiery gems, or fold  
 Thy presence in the silk of sumptuous  
 looms;  
 Nor roll thy viands on a luscious tongue,  
 Nor drown thyself with flies in honied  
 wine;  
 Nor thou be rafeul, like a handled bee,  
 And lose thy life by usage of thy sting;  
 Nor harm an adder thro' the lust for  
 harm,  
 Nor make a snail's horn shrink for wan-  
 tonness;  
 And more — think well! Do-well will  
 follow thought,  
 And in the fatal sequence of this world  
 An evil thought may soil thy children's  
 blood;  
 But curb the beast would cast thee in the  
 mire,  
 And leave the hot swamp of voluptuous-  
 ness  
 A cloud between the Nameless and thy-  
 self,  
 And lay thine uphill shoulder to the  
 wheel,  
 And climb the Mount of Blessing, whence,  
 if thou  
 Look higher, then — perchance — thou  
 mayest — beyond  
 A hundred ever-rising mountain lines,  
 And past the range of Night and Shadow  
 — see  
 The high-heaven dawn of more than  
 mortal day  
 Strike on the Mount of Vision!  
 So, farewell.

## THE FLIGHT.

## I.

ARE you sleeping? have you forgotten?  
 do not sleep, my sister dear!  
 How *can* you sleep? the morning brings  
 the day I hate and fear;  
 The cock has crow'd already once, he  
 crows before his time;  
 Awake! the creeping glimmer steals, the  
 hills are white with rime.

## II.

Ah, clasp me in your arms, sister, ah,  
 fold me to your breast!  
 Ah, let me weep my fill once more, and  
 cry myself to rest!  
 To rest? to rest and wake no more were  
 better rest for me,  
 Than to waken every morning to that  
 face I loathe to see:

## III.

I envied your sweet slumber, all night so  
 calm you lay,  
 The night was calm, the morn is calm,  
 and like another day;  
 But I could wish yon moaning sea would  
 rise and burst the shore,  
 And such a whirlwind blow these woods,  
 as never blew before.

## IV.

For, one by one, the stars went down  
 across the gleaming pane,  
 And project after project rose, and all of  
 them were vain;  
 The blackthorn-blossom fades and falls  
 and leaves the bitter sloe,  
 The hope I catch at vanishes and youth  
 is turn'd to woe.

## V.

Come, speak a little comfort! all night  
 I pray'd with tears,  
 And yet no comfort came to me, and  
 now the morn appears,  
 When he will tear me from your side,  
 who bought me for his slave:  
 This father pays his debt with me, and  
 weds me to my grave.

## VI.

What father, this or mine, was he, who,  
 on that summer day  
 When I had fall'n from off the crag we  
 clamber'd up in play,  
 Found, fear'd me dead, and groan'd, and  
 took and kiss'd me, and again  
 He kiss'd me; and I loved him then;  
 he *was* my father then.

## VII.

No father now, the tyrant vassal of a  
tyrant vice!  
The Godless Jephtha vows his child . . .  
to one cast of the dice.  
These ancient woods, this Hall at last  
will go — perhaps have gone,  
Except his own meek daughter yield her  
life, heart, soul to one —

## VIII.

To one who knows I scorn him. O the  
formal mocking bow,  
The cruel smile, the courtly phrase that  
masks his malice now —  
But often in the sidelong eyes a gleam of  
all things ill —  
It is not Love but Hate that weds a  
bride against her will;

## IX.

Hate, that would pluck from this true  
breast the locket that I wear,  
The precious crystal into which I braided  
Edwin's hair!  
The love that keeps this heart alive beats  
on it night and day —  
One golden curl, his golden gift, before  
he past away.

## X.

He left us weeping in the woods; his  
boat was on the sand;  
How slowly down the rocks he went,  
how loth to quit the land!  
And all my life was darken'd, as I saw  
the white sail run,  
And darken, up that lane of light into  
the setting sun.

## XI.

How often have we watch'd the sun fade  
from us thro' the West,  
And follow Edwin to those isles, those  
islands of the Blest!  
Is *he* not there? would I were there, the  
friend, the bride, the wife,  
With him, where summer never dies,  
with Love, the Sun of life!

## XII.

O would I were in Edwin's arms — once  
more — to feel his breath  
Upon my cheek — on Edwin's ship, with  
Edwin, ev'n in death,  
Tho' all about the shuddering wreck the  
death-white sea should rave,  
Or if lip were laid to lip on the pillows  
of the wave.

## XIII.

Shall I take *him*? I kneel with *him*? I  
swear and swear forsworn  
To love him most, whom most I loathe,  
to honour whom I scorn?  
The Fiend would yell, the grave would  
yawn, my mother's ghost would  
rise —  
To lie, to lie — in God's own house — the  
blackest of all lies!

## XIV.

Why — rather than that hand in mine,  
tho' every pulse would freeze,  
I'd sooner fold an icy corpse dead of  
some foul disease:  
Wed him? I will not wed him, let them  
spurn me from the doors,  
And I will wander till I die about the  
barren moors.

## XV.

The dear, mad bride who stabb'd her  
bridegroom on her bridal night —  
If mad, then I am mad, but sane, if she  
were in the right.  
My father's madness makes me mad —  
but words are only words!  
I am not mad, not yet, not quite — There!  
listen how the birds

## XVI.

Begin to warble yonder in the budding  
orchard trees!  
The lark has past from earth to Heaven  
upon the morning breeze!  
How gladly, were I one of those, how  
early would I wake!  
And yet the sorrow that I bear is sorrow  
for *his* sake.

## XVII.

They love their mates, to whom they  
sing; or else their songs, that meet  
The morning with such music, would  
never be so sweet!  
And tho' these fathers will not hear, the  
blessed Heavens are just,  
And Love is fire, and burns the feet  
would trample it to dust.

## XVIII.

A door was open'd in the house—who?  
who? my father sleeps!  
A stealthy foot upon the stair! he—some  
one—this way creeps!  
If he? yes, he . . . lurks, listens, fears  
his victim may have fled—  
He! where is some sharp-pointed thing?  
he comes, and finds me dead.

## XIX.

Not he, not yet! and time to act—but  
how my temples burn!  
And idle fancies flutter me, I know not  
where to turn;  
Speak to me, sister; counsel me; this  
marriage must not be.  
You only know the love that makes the  
world a world to me!

## XX.

Our gentle mother, had *she* lived—but  
we were left alone:  
That other left us to ourselves; he cared  
not for his own;  
So all the summer long we roam'd in  
these wild woods of ours,  
My Edwin loved to call us then 'His  
two wild woodland flowers.'

## XXI.

Wild flowers blowing side by side in  
God's free light and air,  
Wild flowers of the secret woods, when  
Edwin found us there,  
Wild woods in which we roved with him,  
and heard his passionate vow,  
Wild woods in which we rove no more,  
if we be parted now!

## XXII.

You will not leave me thus in grief to  
wander forth forlorn;  
We never changed a bitter word, not  
once since we were born;  
Our dying mother join'd our hands; she  
knew this father well;  
She bade us love, like souls in Heaven,  
and now I fly from Hell,

## XXIII.

And you with me; and we shall light  
upon some lonely shore,  
Some lodge within the waste sea-dunes,  
and hear the waters roar,  
And see the ships from out the West go  
dipping thro' the foam,  
And sunshine on that sail at last which  
brings our Edwin home.

## XXIV.

But look, the morning grows apace, and  
lights the old church-tower,  
And lights the clock! the hand points  
five—O me—it strikes the hour—  
I bide no more, I meet my fate, whatever  
ills betide!  
Arise, my own true sister, come forth!  
the world is wide.

## XXV.

And yet my heart is ill at ease, my eyes  
are dim with dew,  
I seem to see a new-dug grave up yonder  
by the yew!  
If we should never more return, but  
wander hand in hand  
With breaking hearts, without a friend,  
and in a distant land!

## XXVI.

O sweet, they tell me that the world is  
hard, and harsh of mind,  
But can it be so hard, so harsh, as those  
that should be kind?  
That matters not: let come what will;  
at last the end is sure,  
And every heart that loves with truth is  
equal to endure.

## TOMORROW.

## I.

HER, that yer Honour was spakin' to?  
Whin, yer Honour? last year —  
Standin' here by the bridge, when last  
yer Honour was here?  
An' yer Honour ye gev her the top of the  
mornin', 'Tomorra,' says she.  
What did they call her, yer Honour?  
They call'd her Molly Magee.  
An' yer Honour's the thrue ould blood  
that always manes to be kind,  
But there's rason in all things, yer  
Honour, for Molly was out of  
her mind.

## II.

Shure, an' meself remimbers wan night  
comin' down be the sthrame,  
An' it seems to me now like a bit of  
yisther-day in a dhrame —  
Here where yer Honour seen her — there  
was but a slip of a moon,  
But I hard thim — Molly Magee wid her  
bachelor, Danny O'Roon —  
'You've been takin' a dhrop o' the  
crathur,' an' Danny says, 'Troth,  
an' I been  
Dhrinkin' yer health wid Shamus O'Shea  
at Katty's shebeen;<sup>1</sup>  
But I must be lavin' ye soon.' 'Ochone  
are ye goin' away?'  
'Goin' to cut the Sassenach whate,' he  
says, 'over the say' —  
'An' whin will ye meet me agin?' an' I  
hard him, 'Molly asthore,  
I'll meet you agin tomorra,' says he, 'be  
the chapel-door.'  
'An' whin are ye goin' to lave me?'  
'O' Monday mornin',' says he;  
'An' shure thin ye'll meet me tomorra?'  
'Tomorra, tomorra, Machree!'  
Thin Molly's ould mother, yer Honour,  
that had no likin' for Dan,  
Call'd from her cabin an' tould her to  
come away from the man,  
An' Molly Magee kem flyin' acrass me,  
as light as a lark,  
An' Dan stood there for a minute, an'  
thin wint into the dark.

<sup>1</sup> Grog-shop.

But wirrah! the storm that night — the  
tundher, an' rain that fell,  
An' the sthrames runnin' down at the  
back o' the glin 'ud 'a dhrownded  
Hell.

## III.

But airth was at pace nixt mornin', an'  
Hiven in its glory smiled,  
As the Holy Mother o' Glory that smiles  
at her sleepin' child —  
Ethen — she stept an the chapel-green,  
an' she turn'd herself roun'  
Wid a diamond dhrop in her eye, for  
Danny was not to be foun',  
An' many's the time that I watch'd her  
at mass lettin' down the tear,  
For the Divil a Danny was there, yer  
Honour, for forty year.

## IV.

Och, Molly Magee, wid the red o' the  
rose an' the white o' the May,  
An' yer hair as black as the night, an'  
yer eyes as bright as the day!  
Achora, yer laste little whispher was  
sweet as the lilt of a bird!  
Acushla, ye set me heart batin' to music  
wid ivery word!  
An' sorra the Queen wid her sceptre in  
sich an illigant han',  
An' the fall of yer foot in the dance was  
as light as snow an the lan',  
An' the sun kem out of a cloud whiniver  
ye walkt in the shtreet,  
An' Shamus O'Shea was yer shadda, an'  
laid himself undher yer feet,  
An' I loved ye meself wid a heart and a  
half, me darlin', and he  
'Ud 'a shot his own sowl dead for a kiss  
of ye, Molly Magee.

## V.

But shure we wor betther frinds whin I  
crack'd his skull for her sake,  
An' he ped me back wid the best he  
could give at ould Donovan's  
wake —  
For the boys wor about her agin whin  
Dan didn't come to the fore,  
An' Shamus along wid the rest, but she  
put thim all to the door.

An', afther, I thried her meself av the  
bird 'ud come to me call,  
But Molly, begorra, 'ud listhen to naither  
at all, at all.

## VI.

An' her nabours an' frinds 'ud consowl  
an' condowl wid her, airly and  
late,  
'Your Danny,' they says, 'niver crasst  
over say to the Sassenach whate;  
He's gone to the States, aroon, an' he's  
married another wife,  
An' ye'll niver set eyes an the face of the  
thraithur agin in life!  
An' to dhrame of a married man, death  
alive, is a mortal sin.'  
But Molly says, 'I'd his hand-promise, an'  
shure he'll meet me agin.'

## VII.

An' afther her paärints had inter'd glory,  
an' both in wan day,  
She began to spake to herself, the crathur,  
an' whisper, an' say,  
'Tomorra, Tomorra!' an' Father Mo-  
lowny he tuk her in han',  
'Molly, you're manin',' he says, 'me  
dear, av I undherstan',  
That ye'll meet your paärints agin an'  
yer Danny O'Roon afore God  
Wid his blessed Marthys an' Saints; '  
an' she gev him a friendly nod,  
'Tomorra, Tomorra,' she says, an' she  
didn't intind to desave,  
But her wits wor dead, an' her hair was  
as white as the snow an a grave.

## VIII.

Arrah now, here last month they wor  
diggin' the bog, an' they foun'  
Dhrownded in black bog-wather a corp  
lyin' undher groun'.

## IX.

Yer Honour's own agint, he says to me  
wanst, at Katty's shebeen,  
'The Divil take all the black lan',  
for a blessin' 'ud come wid the  
green!  
An' where 'ud the poor man, thin, cut  
his bit o' turf for the fire?

But och! bad scan to the bogs whin  
they swallies the man intire!  
An' sorra the bog that's in Hiven wid all  
the light an' the glow,  
An' there's hate enough, shure, widout  
*thim* in the Divil's kitchen below.

## X.

Thim ould blind nagers in Agypt, I hard  
his Riverence say,  
Could keep their haithen kings in the  
flesh for the Jidgemint day,  
An', faix, be the piper o' Moses, they kep'  
the cat an' the dog,  
But it 'ud 'a been aisier work av they  
lived be an Irish bog.

## XI.

How-an-iver they laid this body they  
foun' an the grass  
Be the chapel-door, an' the people 'ud  
see it that wint in to mass —  
But a frish generation had riz, an' most  
of the ould was few,  
An' I didn't know him meself, an' nōne  
of the parish knew.

## XII.

But Molly kem limpin' up wid her stick,  
she was lamed av a knee,  
Thin a slip of a gossoon call'd, 'Div ye  
know him, Molly Magee?'  
An' she stood up straight as the Queen of  
the world — she lifted her head —  
'He said he would meet me tomorra!'  
an' dhropt down dead an the dead.

## XIII.

Och, Molly, we thought, machree, ye  
would start back agin into life,  
Whin we laid yez, aich be aich, at yer  
wake like husban' an' wife.  
Sorra the dhry eye thin but was wet for  
the frinds that was gone!  
Sorra the silent throat but we hard it  
cryin' 'Ochone!'  
An' Shamus O'Shea that has now ten  
childer, hansome an' tall,  
Him an' his childer wor keenin' as if he  
had lost thim all.



## XIV.

Thin his Riverence buried thim both in  
 wan grave be the dead boor-tree,<sup>1</sup>  
 The young man Danny O'Roon wid his  
 ould woman, Molly Magee.

## XV.

May all the flowers o' Jeroosilim blossom  
 an' spring from the grass,  
 Imbrashin' an' kissin' aich other — as  
 ye did — over yer Crass!  
 An' the lark fly out o' the flowers wid  
 his song to the Sun an' the Moon,  
 An' tell thim in Hiven about Molly  
 Magee an' her Danny O'Roon,  
 Till Holy St. Pether gets up wid his kays  
 an' opens the gate!  
 An' shure, be the Crass, that's betther  
 nor cuttin' the Sassenach whate  
 To be there wid the Blessed Mother, an'  
 Saints an' Marthys galore,  
 An' singin' yer 'Aves' an' 'Pathers' for  
 iver an' ivermore.

## XVI.

An' now that I tould yer Honour what-  
 iver I hard an' seen,  
 Yer Honour'll give me a thrifle to dhrink  
 yer health in potheen.

## THE SPINSTER'S SWEET-ARTS.

## I.

MILK for my sweet-arts, Bess! fur it mun  
 be the time about now  
 When Molly cooms in fro' the far-end  
 close wi' her paäils fro' the cow.  
 Eh! tha be new to the plaäce — thou'rt  
 gaäpin' — doesn't tha see  
 I calls 'em arter the fellers es once was  
 sweet upo' me?

## II.

Naäy to be sewer it be past 'er time.  
 What maäkes 'er sa laäte?  
 Goä to the laäne at the back, an' looök  
 thruf Maddison's gaäte!

<sup>1</sup> Elder-tree.

## III.

Sweet-arts! Molly belike may 'a lighted  
 to-night upo' one.  
 Sweet-arts! thanks to the Lord that I  
 niver not listen'd to noän!  
 So I sits i' my oän armchair wi' my oän  
 kettle there o' the hob,  
 An' Tommy the fust, an' Tommy the  
 second, an' Steevie an' Rob.

## IV.

Rob, coom oop 'ere o' my knee. Thou  
 sees that i' spite o' the men  
 I 'a kep' thruf thick an' thin my two  
 'oonderd a-year to mysen;  
 Yis! thaw tha call'd me es pretty es ony  
 lass i' the Shere;  
 An' thou be es pretty a Tabby, but Robby  
 I seed thruf ya there.

## V.

Feyther 'ud saäy I wur ugly es sin, an' I  
 beänt not vaäin,  
 But I niver wur downright hugly, thaw  
 soom 'ud 'a thowt ma plaäin,  
 An' I wasn't sa plaäin i' pink ribbons, ye  
 said I wur pretty i' pinks,  
 An' I liked to 'ear it I did, but I beänt  
 sich a fool as ye thinks;  
 Ye was stroäkin ma down wi' the 'air,  
 as I be a-stroäkin o' you,  
 But whiniver I looöked i' the glass I wur  
 sewer that it couldn't be true;  
 Niver wur pretty, not I, but ye knaw'd it  
 wur pleasant to 'ear,  
 Thaw it warn't not me es wur pretty, but  
 my two 'oonderd a-year.

## VI.

D'ya mind the murnin' when we was  
 a-walkin' togither, an' stood  
 By the claäy'd-ooop pond, that the foälk  
 be sa scared at, i' Gigglesby wood,  
 Wheer the poor wench drownid hersen,  
 black Sal, es 'ed been disgraäced?  
 An' I feel'd thy arm es I stood wur  
 a-creeäpin about my waäist;  
 An' me es wur allus afear'd of a man's  
 gittin' ower fond,  
 I sidled awaäy an' awaäy till I plumpt foot  
 fust i' the pond;

And, Robby, I niver 'a liked tha sa well,  
 as I did that daäy,  
 Fur tha joompt in thysen, an' tha hoickt  
 my feet wi' a flop fro' the claäy.  
 Ay, stick oop thy back, an' set oop thy  
 taäil, tha may gie ma a kiss,  
 Fur I walk'd wi' tha all the way hoam  
 an' wur niver sa nigh saäyin' Yis.  
 But wa boäth was i' sich a clat we was  
 shaämed to cross Gigglesby Greeän,  
 Fur a cat may looök at a king thou knaws  
 but the cat mun be cleän.  
 Sa we boäth on us kep out o' sight o' the  
 winders o' Gigglesby Hinn —  
 Naäy, but the claws o' tha! quiet! they  
 pricks cleän thruf to the skin —  
 An' wa boäth slinkt 'oäm by the brokken  
 shed i' the laäne at the back,  
 Whcer the poodle runn'd at tha once, an'  
 thou runn'd oop o' the thack;  
 An' tha squee'dg'd my 'and i' the shed,  
 fur there we was forced to 'ide,  
 Fur I seed that Steevie wur coomin', and  
 one o' the Tommies beside.

## VII.

There now, what art 'a mewin at, Steevie?  
 for owt I can tell —  
 Robby wur fust to be sewer, or I mowt  
 'a liked tha as well.

## VIII.

But, Robby, I thowt o' tha all the while  
 I wur chaängin' my gown,  
 An' I thowt shall I chaänge my staäte?  
 but, O Lord, upo' coomin' down —  
 My bran-new carpet es fresh es a midder  
 o' flowers i' Maäy —  
 Why 'edn't tha wiped thy shoes? it wur  
 clatted all ower wi' claäy.  
 An' I could 'a cried ammost, fur I seed  
 that it couldn't be,  
 An' Robby I gied tha a raätin that sattled  
 thy coortin o' me.  
 An' Molly an' me was agreed, as we was  
 a-cleänin' the floor,  
 That a man be a durty thing an' a trouble  
 an' plague wi' indoor.  
 But I rued it arter a bit, fur I stuck to  
 tha moor na the rest,  
 But I couldn't 'a lived wi' a man an' I  
 knaws it be all fur the best.

## IX.

Naäy — let ma stroök tha down till I  
 maäkes tha es smooth es silk,  
 But if I 'ed married tha, Robby, thou'd  
 not 'a been worth thy milk,  
 Thou'd niver 'a catch'd ony mice but 'a  
 left me the work to do,  
 And 'a taäen to the bottle beside, so es  
 all that I 'ears be true;  
 But I loovs tha to maäke thysen 'appy,  
 an' soa purr awaäy, my dear,  
 Thou 'ed wellnigh purr'd ma awaäy fro'  
 my oän two 'oonderd a-year.

## X.

Sweärin agean, you Toms, as ye used to  
 do twelve year sin'!  
 Ye niver 'eärd Steevie sweär 'cep' it wur  
 at a dog coomin' in,  
 An' boath o' ye mun be fools to be hallus  
 a-shawin' your claws,  
 Fur I niver cared nothink for neither —  
 an' one o' ye deäd ye knaws!  
 Coom gie hoäver then, weant ye? I  
 warrant ye soom fine daäy —  
 There, lig down — I shall hev to gie  
 one or tother awaäy.  
 Can't ye taäke pattern by Steevie? ye  
 sha'n't hev a drop fro' the paäil.  
 Steevie be right good manners bang thruf  
 to the tip o' the taäil.

## XI.

Robby, git down wi' tha, wilt tha? let  
 Steevie coom oop o' my knee.  
 Steevie, my lad, thou 'ed very nigh been  
 the Steevie fur me!  
 Robby wur fust to be sewer, 'e wur burn  
 an' bred i' the 'ouse,  
 But thou be es 'ansom a tabby es iver  
 patted a mouse.

## XII.

An' I beänt not vaäin, but I knaws I 'ed  
 led tha a quieter life  
 Nor her wi' the hepitaph yonder! 'A  
 faäithful an' loovin' wife!  
 An' 'cos o' thy farm by the beck, an' thy  
 windmill oop o' the croft,  
 Tha thowt tha would marry ma, did tha?  
 but that wur a bit ower soft,

Thaw thou was es soäber es daäy, wi' a  
niced red faäce, an' es cleän  
Es a shillin' fresh fro' the mint wi' a bran-  
new 'eäd o' the Queeän,  
An' thy farmin' es cleän es thysen', fur,  
Steevie, tha kep' it sa neät  
That I niver not spied sa much es a  
poppy along wi' the wheät,  
An' the wool of a thistle a-flyin' an'  
secädin' tha haätet to see;  
'Twur es bad es a battle-twig<sup>1</sup> 'ere i' my  
oän blue chaumber to me.  
Ay, roob thy whiskers ageän ma, fur I  
could 'a taäen to tha well,  
But fur thy bairns, poor Steevie, a  
bouncin' boy an' a gell.

## XIII.

An' thou was es fond o' thy bairns es I  
be mysen o' my cats,  
But I niver not wish'd fur childer, I  
hevn't naw likin' fur brats;  
Pretty anew when ya dresses 'em oop,  
an' they goäs fur a walk,  
Or sits wi' their 'ands afoor 'em, an'  
doesn't not 'inder the talk!  
But their bottles o' pap, an' their mucky  
bibs, an' the clats an' the clouts,  
An' their mashin' their toys to pieäces an'  
maäkin' ma deäf wi' their shouts,  
An' hallus a-joompin' about ma as if they  
was set upo' springs,  
An' a-haxin' ma hawkard questions, an'  
saäyin' ondecnt things,  
An' a-callin' ma 'bugly' mayhap to my  
faäce, or a-teärin' my gown—  
Dear! dear! dear! I mun part them  
Tommies—Steevie git down.

## XIV.

Ye be wuss nor the men-tommies, you.  
I tell'd ya, na moor o' that!  
Tom, lig there o' the cushion, an' tother  
Tom 'ere o' the mat.

## XV.

There! I ha' master'd *them!* Hed I  
married the Tommies—O Lord,  
To loove an' obaäy the Tommies! I  
couldn't 'a stuck by my word.  
To be horder'd about, an' waäked, when  
Molly 'd put out the light,

<sup>1</sup> Earwig.

By a man coomin' in wi' a hiccup at ony  
hour o' the night!  
An' the taäble staäin'd wi' 'is aäle, an' the  
mud o' 'is boots o' the stairs,  
An' the stink o' 'is pipe i' the 'ouse,  
an' the mark o' 'is 'eäd o' the  
chairs!  
An' noän o' my four sweet-arts 'ud 'a let  
me 'a hed my oän waäy,  
Sa I likes 'em best wi' taäils when they  
'evn't a word to saäy.

## XVI.

An' I sits i' my oän little parlour, an'  
sarved by my oän little lass,  
Wi' my oän little garden outside, an' my  
oän bed o' sparrow-grass,  
An' my oän door-porch wi' the woodbine  
an' jessmine a-dressin' it greeän,  
An' my oän fine Jackman i' purple a-  
roäbin' the 'ouse like a Queeän.

## XVII.

An' the little gells hobs to ma hoffeus es  
I be abroad i' the laänes,  
When I goäs fur to coomfut the poor es  
be down wi' their haäches an'  
their pääins:  
An' a haäf-pot o' jam, or a mossel o' meät  
when it beänt too dear,  
They maäkes ma a graäter, Laädy nor 'er  
i' the mansion theer,  
Hes 'es hallus to hax of a man how much  
to spare or to spend;  
An' a spinster I be an' I will be, if soä  
pleäse God, to the hend.

## XVIII.

Mew! mew! — Bess wi' the milk! what  
ha maäde our Molly sa laäte?  
It should 'a been 'ere by seven, an' theree  
— it be strikin' height—  
'Cushie wur craäzed fur 'er cauf, well—I  
'eärd 'er a-maäkin' 'er moän,  
An' I thowt to mysen 'thank God that I  
hevn't naw cauf o' my oän.'  
There!

Set it down!

Now Robby!

You Tommies shall waäit to-night  
Till Robby an' Steevie 'es 'ed their lap  
— an' it sarves ye right.

## LOCKSLEY HALL

SIXTY YEARS AFTER.

LATE, my grandson! half the morning have I paced these sandy tracts,  
Watch'd again the hollow ridges roaring into cataracts,

Wander'd back to living boyhood while I heard the curlews call,  
I myself so close on death, and death itself in Locksley Hall.

So — your happy suit was blasted — she the faultless, the divine;  
And you liken — boyish babble — this boy-love of yours with mine.

I myself have often babbled doubtless of a foolish past;  
Babble, babble; our old England may go down in babble at last.

'Curse him!' curse your fellow-victim? call him dotard in your rage?  
Eyes that lured a doting boyhood well might fool a dotard's age.

Jilted for a wealthier! wealthier? yet perhaps she was not wise;  
I remember how you kiss'd the miniature with those sweet eyes.

In the hall there hangs a painting — Amy's arms about my neck —  
Happy children in a sunbeam sitting on the ribs of wreck.

In my life there was a picture, she that clasp'd my neck had flown;  
I was left within the shadow sitting on the wreck alone.

Yours has been a slighter ailment, will you sicken for her sake?  
You, not you! your modern amourist is of easier, earthlier make.

Amy loved me, Amy fail'd me, Amy was a timid child;  
But your Judith — but your worldling — *she* had never driven me wild.

She that holds the diamond necklace dearer than the golden ring,  
She that finds a winter sunset fairer than a morn of Spring.

She that in her heart is brooding on his briefer lease of life,  
While she vows 'till death shall part us,' she the would-be-widow wife.

She the worldling born of worldlings — father, mother — be content,  
Ev'n the homely farm can teach us there is something in descent.

Yonder in that chapel, slowly sinking now into the ground,  
Lies the warrior, my forefather, with his feet upon the hound.

Cross'd! for once he sail'd the sea to crush the Moslem in his pride;  
Dead the warrior, dead his glory, dead the cause in which he died.

Yet how often I and Amy in the mouldering aisle have stood,  
Gazing for one pensive moment on that founder of our blood.

There again I stood to-day, and where of old we knelt in prayer,  
Close beneath the casement crimson with the shield of Locksley — there,

All in white Italian marble, looking still as if she smiled,  
Lies my Amy dead in child-birth, dead the mother, dead the child.

Dead — and sixty years ago, and dead her aged husband now —  
I this old white-headed dreamer stoop and kiss'd her marble brow.

Gone the fires of youth, the follies, furies, curses, passionate tears,  
Gone like fires and floods and earthquakes of the planet's dawning years.

Fires that shook me once, but now to silent ashes fall'n away.  
Cold upon the dead volcano sleeps the gleam of dying day.

Gone the tyrant of my youth, and mute below the chancel stones,  
All his virtues — I forgive them — black in white above his bones.

Gone the comrades of my bivouac, some in fight against the foe,  
Some thro' age and slow diseases, gone as all on earth will go.

Gone with whom for forty years my life in golden sequence ran,  
She with all the charm of woman, she with all the breadth of man,

Strong in will and rich in wisdom, Edith, yet so lowly-sweet,  
Woman to her inmost heart, and woman to her tender feet,

Very woman of very woman, nurse of ailing body and mind,  
She that link'd again the broken chain that bound me to my kind.

Here to-day was Amy with me, while I wander'd down the coast,  
Near us Edith's holy shadow, smiling at the slighter ghost.

Gone our sailor son thy father, Leonard early lost at sea;  
Thou alone, my boy, of Amy's kin and mine art left to me.

Gone thy tender-natured mother, wearying to be left alone,  
Pining for the stronger heart that once had beat beside her own.

Truth, for Truth is Truth, he worshipt, being true as he was brave;  
Good, for Good is Good, he follow'd, yet he look'd beyond the grave,

Wiser there than you, that crowning barren Death as lord of all,  
Deem this over-tragic drama's closing curtain is the pall!

Beautiful was death in him, who saw the death, but kept the deck,  
Saving women and their babes, and sinking with the sinking wreck,

Gone for ever! Ever? no — for since our dying race began,  
Ever, ever, and for ever was the leading light of man.

Those that in barbarian burials kill'd the slave and slew the wife  
Felt within themselves the sacred passion of the second life.

Indian warriors dream of ampler hunting grounds beyond the night;  
Ev'n the black Australian dying hopes he shall return, a white.

Truth for truth, and good for good! The Good, the True, the Pure, the Just —  
Take the charm 'For ever' from them, and they crumble into dust.

Gone the cry of 'Forward, Forward,' lost within a growing gloom;  
Lost, or only heard in silence from the silence of a tomb.

Half the marvels of my morning, triumphs over time and space,  
Staled by frequency, shrunk by usage, into commonest commonplace!

'Forward' rang the voices then, and of the many mine was one.  
Let us hush this cry of 'Forward' till ten thousand years have gone.

Far among the vanish'd races, old Assyrian kings would flay  
Captives whom they caught in battle — iron-hearted victors they.

Agès after, while in Asia, he that led the wild Moguls,  
Timur built his ghastly tower of eighty thousand human skulls,

Then, and here in Edward's time, an age of noblest English names,  
Christian conquerors took and flung the conquer'd Christian into flames.

Love your enemy, bless your haters, said the Greatest of the great;  
Christian love among the Churches look'd the twin of heathen hate.

From the golden alms of Blessing man had coin'd himself a curse:  
Rome of Cæsar, Rome of Peter, which was crueller? which was worse?

France had shown a light to all men, preach'd a Gospel, all men's good;  
Celtic Demos rose a Demon, shriek'd and slaked the light with blood.

Hope was ever on her mountain, watching till the day begun —  
Crown'd with sunlight — over darkness — from the still unrisen sun.

Have we grown at last beyond the passions of the primal clan?  
'Kill your enemy, for you hate him,' still, 'your enemy' was a man.

Have we sunk below them? peasants maim the helpless horse, and drive  
Innocent cattle under thatch, and burn the kindlier brutes alive.

Brutes, the brutes are not your wrongers — burnt at midnight, found at morn,  
Twisted hard in mortal agony with their offspring, born-unborn,

Clinging to the silent mother! Are we devils? are we men?  
Sweet St. Francis of Assisi, would that he were here again,

He that in his Catholic wholeness used to call the very flowers  
Sisters, brothers — and the beasts — whose pains are hardly less than ours!

Chaos, Cosmos! Cosmos, Chaos! who can tell how all will end?  
Read the wide world's annals, you, and take their wisdom for your friend.



Hope the best, but hold the Present fatal daughter of the Past,  
Shape your heart to front the hour, but dream not that the hour will last.

Ay, if dynamite and revolver leave your courage to be wise :  
When was age so cramm'd with menace? madness? written, spoken lies?

Envy wears the mask of Love, and, laughing sober fact to scorn,  
Cries to Weakest as to Strongest, 'Ye are equals, equal-born.'

Equal-born? O yes, if yonder hill be level with the flat.  
Charm us, Orator, till the Lion look no larger than the Cat,

Till the Cat thro' that mirage of overheated language loom  
Larger than the Lion, — Demos end in working its own doom.

Russia bursts our Indian barrier, shall we fight her? shall we yield?  
Pause! before you sound the trumpet, hear the voices from the field.

Those three hundred millions under one Imperial sceptre now,  
Shall we hold them? shall we loose them? take the suffrage of the plow.

Nay, but these would feel and follow Truth if only you and you,  
Rivals of realm-ruining party, when you speak were wholly true.

Plowmen, Shepherds, have I found, and more than once, and still could find,  
Sons of God, and kings of men in utter nobleness of mind,

Truthful, trustful, looking upward to the practised hustings-liar;  
So the Higher wields the Lower, while the Lower is the Higher.

Here and there a cotter's babe is royal-born by right divine;  
Here and there my lord is lower than his oxen or his swine.

Chaos, Cosmos! Cosmos, Chaos! once again the sickening game;  
Freedom, free to slay herself, and dying while they shout her name.

Step by step we gain'd a freedom known to Europe, known to all;  
Step by step we rose to greatness, — thro' the tonguesters we may fall.

You that woo the Voices — tell them 'old experience is a fool,'  
Teach your flatter'd kings that only those who cannot read can rule.

Pluck the mighty from their seat, but set no meek ones in their place;  
Pillory Wisdom in your markets, pelt your offal at her face.

Tumble Nature heel o'er head, and, yelling with the yelling street,  
Set the feet above the brain and swear the brain is in the feet.

Bring the old dark ages back without the faith, without the hope,  
Break the State, the Church, the Throne, and roll their ruins down the slope.

Authors — essayist, atheist, novelist, realist, rhymester, play your part,  
Paint the mortal shame of nature with the living hues of Art.

Rip your brothers' vices open, strip your own foul passions bare;  
Down with Reticence, down with Reverence—forward—naked—let them stare.

Feed the budding rose of boyhood with the drainage of your sewer;  
Send the drain into the fountain, lest the stream should issue pure.

Set the maiden fancies wallowing in the troughs of Zolaism,—  
Forward, forward, ay and backward, downward too into the abysm.

Do your best to charm the worst, to lower the rising race of men;  
Have we risen from out the beast, then back into the beast again?

Only 'dust to dust' for me that sicken at your lawless din,  
Dust in wholesome old-world dust before the newer world begin.

Heated am I? you—you wonder—well, it scarce becomes mine age—  
Patience! let the dying actor mouth his last upon the stage.

Cries of unprogressive dotage ere the dotard fall asleep?  
Noises of a current narrowing, not the music of a deep?

Ay, for doubtless I am old, and think gray thoughts, for I am gray:  
After all the stormy changes shall we find a changeless May?

After madness, after massacre, Jacobinism and Jacquerie,  
Some diviner force to guide us thro' the days I shall not see?

When the schemes and all the systems, Kingdoms and Republics fall,  
Something kindlier, higher, holier—all for each and each for all?

All the full-brain, half-brain races, led by Justice, Love, and Truth;  
All the millions one at length with all the visions of my youth?

All diseases quench'd by Science, no man halt or deaf or blind;  
Stronger ever born of weaker, lustier body, larger mind?

Earth at last a warless world, a single race, a single tongue—  
I have seen her far away—for is not Earth as yet so young?—

Every tiger madness muzzled, every serpent passion kill'd,  
Every grim ravine a garden, every blazing desert till'd,

Robed in universal harvest up to either pole she smiles,  
Universal ocean softly washing all her warless Isles.

Warless? when her tens are thousands, and her thousands millions, then—  
All her harvest all too narrow—who can fancy warless men?

Warless? war will die out late then. Will it ever? late or soon?  
Can it, till this outworn earth be dead as yon dead world the moon?

Dead the new astronomy calls her. . . . On this day and at this hour,  
In this gap between the sandhills, whence you see the Locksley tower,

Here we met, our latest meeting — Amy — sixty years ago —  
She and I — the moon was falling greenish thro' a rosy glow,

Just above the gateway tower, and even where you see her now —  
Here we stood and claspt each other, swore the seeming-deathless vow. . . .

Dead, but how her living glory lights the hall, the dune, the grass!  
Yet the moonlight is the sunlight, and the Sun himself will pass.

Venus near her! smiling downward at this earthlier earth of ours,  
Closer on the Sun, perhaps a world of never fading flowers.

Hesper, whom the poet call'd the Bringer home of all good things.  
All good things may move in Hesper, perfect peoples, perfect kings.

Hesper — Venus — were we native to that splendour or in Mars,  
We should see the Globe we groan in, fairest of their evening stars.

Could we dream of wars and carnage, craft and madness, lust and spite,  
Roaring London, raving Paris, in that point of peaceful light?

Might we not in glancing heavenward on a star so silver-fair,  
Yearn, and clasp the hands and murmur, ' Would to God that we were there '?

Forward, backward, backward, forward, in the immeasurable sea,  
Sway'd by vaster ebbs and flows than can be known to you or me.

All the suns — are these but symbols of innumerable man,  
Man or Mind that sees a shadow of the planner or the plan?

Is there evil but on earth? or pain in every peopled sphere?  
Well be grateful for the sounding watchword ' Evolution ' here,

Evolution ever climbing after some ideal good,  
And Reversion ever dragging Evolution in the mud.

What are men that He should heed us? cried the king of sacred song;  
Insects of an hour, that hourly work their brother insect wrong,

While the silent Heavens roll, and Suns along their fiery way,  
All their planets whirling round them, flash a million miles a day.

Many an Æon moulded earth before her highest, man, was born,  
Many an Æon too may pass when earth is manless and forlorn,

Earth so huge, and yet so bounded — pools of salt, and plots of land —  
Shallow skin of green and azure — chains of mountain, grains of sand!

Only That which made us, meant us to be mightier by and by,  
Set the sphere of all the boundless Heavens within the human eye,

Sent the shadow of Himself, the boundless, thro' the human soul;  
Boundless inward, in the atom, boundless outward, in the Whole.

\* \* \* \* \*

Here is Locksley Hall, my grandson, here the lion-guarded gate.  
Not to-night in Locksley Hall — to-morrow — you, you come so late.

Wreck'd — your train — or all but wreck'd? a shatter'd wheel? a vicious boy!  
Good, this forward, you that preach it, is it well to wish you joy?

Is it well that while we range with Science, glorying in the Time,  
City children soak and blacken soul and sense in city slime?

There among the glooming alleys Progress halts on palsied feet,  
Crime and hunger cast our maidens by the thousand on the street.

There the Master scrimps his haggard sempstress of her daily bread,  
There a single sordid attic holds the living and the dead.

There the smouldering fire of fever creeps across the rotted floor,  
And the crowded couch of incest in the warrens of the poor.

Nay, your pardon, cry your 'forward,' yours are hope and youth, but I —  
Eighty winters leave the dog too lame to follow with the cry,

Lame and old, and past his time, and passing now into the night;  
Yet I would the rising race were half as eager for the light.

Light the fading gleam of Even? light the glimmer of the dawn?  
Aged eyes may take the growing glimmer for the gleam withdrawn.

Far away beyond her myriad coming changes earth will be  
Something other than the wildest modern guess of you and me.

Earth may reach her earthly-worst, or if she gain her earthly-best,  
Would she find her human offspring this ideal man at rest?

Forward then, but still remember how the course of Time will swerve,  
Crook and turn upon itself in many a backward streaming curve.

Not the Hall to-night, my grandson! Death and Silence hold their own.  
Leave the Master in the first dark hour of his last sleep alone.

Worthier soul was he than I am, sound and honest, rustic Squire,  
Kindly landlord, boon companion — youthful jealousy is a liar.

Cast the poison from your bosom, oust the madness from your brain.  
Let the trampled serpent show you that you have not lived in vain.

Youthful! youth and age are scholars yet but in the lower school,  
Nor is he the wisest man who never proved himself a fool.

Yonder lies our young sea-village — Art and Grace are less and less:  
Science grows and Beauty dwindles — roofs of slated hideousness!

There is one old Hostel left us where they swing the Locksley shield,  
Till the peasant cow shall butt the 'Lion passant' from his field.

Poor old Heraldry, poor old History, poor old Poetry, passing hence,  
In the common deluge drowning old political common-sense!

Poor old voice of eighty crying after voices that have fled!  
All I loved are vanish'd voices, all my steps are on the dead.

All the world is ghost to me, and as the phantom disappears,  
Forward far and far from here is all the hope of eighty years.

\* \* \* \* \*

In this Hostel — I remember — I repent it o'er his grave —  
Like a clown — by chance he met me — I refused the hand he gave.

From that casement where the trailer mantles all the mouldering bricks —  
I was then in early boyhood, Edith but a child of six —

While I shelter'd in this archway from a day of driving showers —  
Peeped the winsome face of Edith like a flower among the flowers.

Here to-night! the Hall to-morrow, when they toll the Chapel bell!  
Shall I hear in one dark room a wailing, 'I have loved thee well.'

Then a peal that shakes the portal — one has come to claim his bride,  
Her that shrank, and put me from her, shriek'd, and started from my side —

Silent echoes! You, my Leonard, use and not abuse your day,  
Move among your people, know them, follow him who led the way,

Strove for sixty widow'd years to help his homelier brother men,  
Served the poor, and built the cottage, raised the school, and drain'd the fen.

Hears he now the Voice that wrong'd him? who shall swear it cannot be?  
Earth would never touch her worst, were one in fifty such as he.

Ere she gain her Heavenly-best, a God must mingle with the game:  
Nay, there may be those about us whom we neither see nor name,

Felt within us as ourselves, the Powers of Good, the Powers of Ill,  
Strowing balm, or shedding poison in the fountains of the Will.

Follow you the Star that lights a desert pathway, yours or mine.  
Forward, till you see the highest Human Nature is divine.

Follow Light, and do the Right — for man can half-control his doom —  
Till you find the deathless Angel seated in the vacant tomb.

Forward, let the stormy moment fly and mingle with the Past.  
I that loathed, have come to love him. Love will conquer at the last.

Gone at eighty, mine own age, and I and you will bear the pall;  
Then I leave thee Lord and Master, latest Lord of Locksley Hall.

PROLOGUE  
TO GENERAL HAMLEY.

OUR birches yellowing and from each  
The light leaf falling fast,  
While squirrels from our fiery beech  
Were bearing off the mast,  
You came, and look'd and loved the view  
Long-known and loved by me,  
Green Sussex fading into blue  
With one gray glimpse of sea;  
And, gazing from this height alone,  
We spoke of what had been  
Most marvellous in the wars your own  
Crimean eyes had seen;  
And now—like old-world inns that take  
Some warrior for a sign  
That therewithin a guest may make  
True cheer with honest wine—  
Because you heard the lines I read  
Nor utter'd word of blame,  
I dare without your leave to head  
These rhymings with your name,  
Who know you but as one of those  
I fain would meet again,  
Yet know you, as your England knows  
That you and all your men  
Were soldiers to her heart's desire,  
When, in the vanish'd year,  
You saw the league-long rampart-fire  
Flare from Tel-el-Kebir  
Thro' darkness, and the foe was driven,  
And Wolseley overthrew  
Arâbi, and the stars in heaven  
Paled, and the glory grew.

THE CHARGE OF THE HEAVY  
BRIGADE AT BALACLAVA.

OCTOBER 25, 1854.

I.

THE charge of the gallant three hundred,  
The Heavy Brigade!  
Down the hill, down the hill, thousands  
Of Russians,  
Thousands of horsemen, drew to the  
valley—and stay'd;  
For Scarlett and Scarlett's three hundred  
were riding by  
When the points of the Russian lances  
arose in the sky;

And he call'd 'Left wheel into line!  
'and they wheel'd and obey'd.  
Then he look'd at the host that had  
halted he knew not why,  
And he turn'd half round, and he bade  
his trumpeter sound  
To the charge, and he rode on ahead, as  
he waved his blade  
To the gallant three hundred whose glory  
will never die—  
'Follow,' and up the hill, up the hill,  
up the hill,  
Follow'd the Heavy Brigade.

II.

The trumpet, the gallop, the charge,  
and the might of the fight!  
Thousands of horsemen had gather'd  
there on the height,  
With a wing push'd out to the left and  
a wing to the right,  
And who shall escape if they close? but  
he dash'd up alone  
Thro' the great gray slope of men,  
Sway'd his sabre, and held his own  
Like an Englishman there and then;  
All in a moment follow'd with force  
Three that were next in their fiery  
course,  
Wedged themselves in between horse  
and horse,  
Fought for their lives in the narrow gap  
they had made—  
Four amid thousands! and up the hill,  
up the hill,  
Gallopt the gallant three hundred, the  
Heavy Brigade.

III.

Fell like a cannonshot,  
Burst like a thunderbolt,  
Crash'd like a hurricane,  
Broke thro' the mass from below,  
Drove thro' the midst of the foe,  
Plunged up and down, to and fro,  
Rode flashing blow upon blow,  
Brave Inniskillens and Greys  
Whirling their sabres in circles of light!  
And some of us, all in amaze,  
Who were held for a while from the  
fight,



And were only standing at gaze,  
 When the dark-muffled Russian crowd  
 Folded its wings from the left and the  
 right,  
 And roll'd them around like a cloud, —  
 O mad for the charge and the battle  
 were we,  
 When our own good redcoats sank from  
 sight,  
 Like drops of blood in a dark-gray sea,  
 And we turn'd to each other, whispering,  
 all dismay'd,  
 'Lost are the gallant three hundred of  
 Scarlett's Brigade!'

IV.

'Lost one and all' were the words  
 Mutter'd in our dismay;  
 But they rode like Victors and Lords  
 Thro' the forest of lances and swords  
 In the heart of the Russian hordes,  
 They rode, or they stood at bay —  
 Struck with the sword-hand and slew,  
 Down with the bridle-hand drew  
 The foe from the saddle and threw  
 Underfoot there in the fray —  
 Ranged like a storm or stood like a rock  
 In the wave of a stormy day;  
 Till suddenly shock upon shock  
 Stagger'd the mass from without,  
 Drove it in wild disarray,  
 For our men gallopt up with a cheer and  
 a shout,  
 And the foeman surged, and waver'd,  
 and reel'd  
 Up the hill, up the hill, up the hill, out  
 of the field,  
 And over the brow and away.

V.

Glory to each and to all, and the charge  
 that they made!  
 Glory to all the three hundred, and all  
 the Brigade!

NOTE. — The 'three hundred' of the 'Heavy  
 Brigade' who made this famous charge were the  
 Scots Greys and the 2nd squadron of Inniskil-  
 lings, the remainder of the 'Heavy Brigade'  
 subsequently dashing up to their support.

The 'three' were Scarlett's aide-de-camp,  
 Elliot, and the trumpeter and Shegog the orderly,  
 who had been close behind him.

EPILOGUE.

IRENE.

NOT this way will you set your name  
 A star among the stars.

POET.

What way?

IRENE.

You praise when you should blame  
 The barbarism of wars.  
 A juster epoch has begun.

POET.

Yet tho' this cheek be gray,  
 And that bright hair the modern sun,  
 Those eyes the blue to-day,  
 You wrong me, passionate little friend.  
 I would that wars should cease,  
 I would the globe from end to end  
 Might sow and reap in peace,  
 And some new Spirit o'erbear the old,  
 Or Trade refrain the Powers  
 From war with kindly links of gold,  
 Or Love with wreaths of flowers.  
 Slav, Teuton, Kelt, I count them all  
 My friends and brother souls,  
 With all the peoples, great and small,  
 That wheel between the poles.  
 But since, our mortal shadow, ill  
 To waste this earth began —  
 Perchance from some abuse of Will  
 In worlds before the man  
 Involving ours — he needs must fight  
 To make true peace his own,  
 He needs must combat might with might,  
 Or Might would rule alone;  
 And who loves War for War's own sake  
 Is fool, or crazed, or worse;  
 But let the patriot-soldier take  
 His meed of fame in verse;  
 Nay — tho' that realm were in the wrong  
 For which her warriors bleed,  
 It still were right to crown with song  
 The warrior's noble deed —  
 A crown the Singer hopes may last,  
 For so the deed endures;  
 But Song will vanish in the Vast;  
 And that large phrase of yours  
 'A Star among the stars,' my dear,  
 Is girlish talk at best;  
 For dare we dally with the sphere  
 As he did half in jest,

Old Horace? 'I will strike,' said he,  
 'The stars with head sublime,'  
 But scarce could see, as now we see,  
 The man in Space and Time,  
 So drew perchance a happier lot  
 Than ours, who rhyme to-day.  
 The fires that arch this dusky dot —  
 Yon myriad-worlded way —  
 The vast sun-clusters' gather'd blaze,  
 World-isles in lonely skies,  
 Whole heavens within themselves, amaze  
 Our brief humanities;  
 And so does Earth; for Homer's fame,  
 Tho' carved in harder stone —  
 The falling drop will make his name  
 As mortal as my own.

IRENE.

No!

POET.

Let it live then — ay, till when?  
 Earth passes, all is lost  
 In what they prophesy, our wise men,  
 Sun-flame or sunless frost,  
 And deed and song alike are swept  
 Away, and all in vain  
 As far as man can see, except  
 The man himself remain;  
 And tho', in this lean age forlorn,  
 Too many a voice may cry  
 That man can have no after-morn,  
 Not yet of these am I.  
 The man remains, and whatsoever  
 He wrought of good or brave  
 Will mould him thro' the cycle-year  
 That dawns behind the grave.

And here the Singer for his Art  
 Not all in vain may plead  
 'The song that nerves a nation's heart,  
 Is in itself a deed.'

### TO VIRGIL.

WRITTEN AT THE REQUEST OF THE  
 MANTUANS FOR THE NINETEENTH  
 CENTENARY OF VIRGIL'S DEATH.

I.

ROMAN VIRGIL, thou that singest  
 Iliion's lofty temples robed in fire,

Iliion falling, Rome arising,  
 wars, and filial faith, and Dido's  
 pyre;

II.

Landscape-lover, lord of language  
 more than he that sang the Works  
 and Days,  
 All the chosen coin of fancy  
 flashing out from many a golden  
 phrase;

III.

Thou that singest wheat and woodland,  
 tilth and vineyard, hive and horse  
 and herd;  
 All the charm of all the Muses  
 often flowering in a lonely word;

IV.

Poet of the happy Tityrus  
 piping underneath his beechen  
 bowers;  
 Poet of the poet-satyr  
 whom the laughing shepherd  
 bound with flowers;

V.

Chanter of the Pollio, glorying  
 in the blissful years again to be,  
 Summers of the snakeless meadow,  
 unlaborious earth and oarless sea;

VI.

Thou that seest Universal  
 Nature moved by Universal  
 Mind;  
 Thou majestic in thy sadness  
 at the doubtful doom of human  
 kind;

VII.

Light among the vanish'd ages;  
 star that gildest yet this phantom  
 shore;  
 Golden branch amid the shadows,  
 kings and realms that pass to rise  
 no more;

VIII.

Now thy Forum roars no longer,  
 fallen every purple Caesar's  
 dome —

Tho' thine ocean-roll of rhythm  
 sound for ever of Imperial  
 Rome —

## IX.

Now the Rome of slaves hath perish'd,  
 and the Rome of freemen holds  
 her place,

I, from out the Northern Island  
 sunder'd once from all the human  
 race,

## X.

I salute thee, Mantovano,  
 I that loved thee since my day  
 began,

Wielder of the stateliest measure  
 ever moulded by the lips of man.

## THE DEAD PROPHET.

182—.

## I.

DEAD!

And the Muses cried with a stormy cry  
 'Send them no more, for evermore.  
 Let the people die.'

## II.

Dead!

'Is it *he* then brought so low?'  
 And a careless people flock'd from the  
 fields

With a purse to pay for the show.

## III.

Dead, who had served his time,  
 Was one of the people's kings,  
 Had labour'd in lifting them out of slime,  
 And showing them souls have wings!

## IV.

Dumb on the winter heath he lay.

His friends had stript him bare,  
 And roll'd his nakedness every way  
 That all the crowd might stare.

## V.

A storm-worn signpost not to be read,  
 And a tree with a moulder'd nest  
 On its barkless bones, stood stark by the  
 dead;  
 And behind him, low in the West,

## VI.

With shifting ladders of shadow and light,  
 And blur'd in colour and form,  
 The sun hung over the gates of Night,  
 And glared at a coming storm.

## VII.

Then glided a vulturous Beldam forth,  
 That on dumb death had thriven;  
 They call'd her 'Reverence' here upon  
 earth,  
 And 'The Curse of the Prophet' in  
 Heaven.

## VIII.

She knelt — 'We worship him' — all but  
 wept —  
 'So great, so noble was he!'  
 She clear'd her sight, she arose, she swept  
 The dust of earth from her knee.

## IX.

'Great! for he spoke and the people  
 heard,  
 And his eloquence caught like a flame  
 From zone to zone of the world, till his  
 Word  
 Had won him a noble name.

## X.

Noble! he sung, and the sweet sound ran  
 Thro' palace and cottage door,  
 For he touch'd on the whole sad planet  
 of man,  
 The kings and the rich and the poor;

## XI.

And he sung not alone of an old sun set,  
 But a sun coming up in his youth!  
 Great and noble — O yes — but yet —  
 For man is a lover of Truth,

## XII.

And bound to follow, wherever she go  
 Stark-naked, and up or down,  
 Thro' her high hill-passes of stainless  
 snow,  
 Or the foulest sewer of the town —

## XIII.

Noble and great — O ay — but then,  
 Tho' a prophet should have his due,  
 Was he noblier-fashion'd than other men?  
 Shall we see to it, I and you?

## XIV.

For since he would sit on a Prophet's  
 seat,  
 As a lord of the Human soul,  
 We needs must scan him from head to  
 feet  
 Were it but for a wart or a mole?'

## XV.

His wife and his child stood by him in  
 tears,  
 But she — she push'd them aside.  
 'Tho' a name may last for a thousand  
 years,  
 Yet a truth is a truth,' she cried.

## XVI.

And she that had haunted his pathway  
 still,  
 Had often truckled and cower'd  
 When he rose in his wrath, and had  
 yielded her will  
 To the master, as overpower'd,

## XVII.

She tumbled his helpless corpse about.  
 'Small blemish upon the skin!  
 But I think we know what is fair without  
 Is often as foul within.'

## XVIII.

She crouch'd, she tore him part from  
 part,  
 And out of his body she drew  
 The red 'Blood-eagle'<sup>1</sup> of liver and  
 heart;  
 She held them up to the view;

## XIX.

She gabbled, as she groped in the dead,  
 And all the people were pleased;

<sup>1</sup> Old Viking term for lungs, liver, etc., when  
 torn by the conqueror out of the body of the  
 conquered.

'See, what a little heart,' she said,  
 'And the liver is half-diseased!'

## XX.

She tore the Prophet after death,  
 And the people paid her well.  
 Lightnings flicker'd along the heath;  
 One shriek'd 'The fires of Hell!'

## EARLY SPRING.

## I.

ONCE more the Heavenly Power  
 Makes all things new,  
 And domes the red-plow'd hills  
 With loving blue;  
 The blackbirds have their wills,  
 The throstles too.

## II.

Opens a door in Heaven;  
 From skies of glass  
 A Jacob's ladder falls  
 On greening grass,  
 And o'er the mountain-walls  
 Young angels pass.

## III.

Before them fleets the shower,  
 And burst the buds,  
 And shine the level lands,  
 And flash the floods;  
 The stars are from their hands  
 Flung thro' the woods,

## IV.

The woods with living airs  
 How softly fann'd,  
 Light airs from where the deep,  
 All down the sand,  
 Is breathing in his sleep,  
 Heard by the land.

## V.

O follow, leaping blood,  
 The season's lure!  
 O heart, look down and up  
 Serene, secure,  
 Warm as the crocus cup,  
 Like snowdrops, pure!

VI.

Past, Future glimpse and fade—  
Thro' some slight spell,  
A gleam from yonder vale,  
Some far blue fell,  
And sympathies, how frail,  
In sound and smell!

VII.

Till at thy chuckled note,  
Thou twinkling bird,  
The fairy fancies range,  
And, lightly stirr'd,  
Ring little bells of change  
From word to word.

VIII.

For now the Heavenly Power  
Makes all things new,  
And thaws the cold, and fills  
The flower with dew;  
The blackbirds have their wills,  
The poets too.

PREFATORY POEM TO MY  
BROTHER'S SONNETS.

*Midnight, June 30, 1879.*

I.

MIDNIGHT — in no midsummer tune  
The breakers lash the shores:  
The cuckoo of a joyless June  
Is calling out of doors:

And thou hast vanish'd from thine own  
To that which looks like rest,  
True brother, only to be known  
By those who love thee best.

II.

Midnight — and joyless June gone by,  
And from the deluged park  
The cuckoo of a worse July  
Is calling thro' the dark:

But thou art silent underground,  
And o'er thee streams the rain,  
True poet, surely to be found  
When Truth is found again.

III.

And, now to these unsummer'd skies  
The summer bird is still,  
Far off a phantom cuckoo cries  
From out a phantom hill;

And thro' this midnight breaks the sun  
Of sixty years away,  
The light of days when life begun,  
The days that seem to-day,

When all my griefs were shared with thee,  
As all my hopes were thine —  
As all thou wert was one with me,  
May all thou art be mine!

'FRATER AVE ATQUE VALE.'

Row us out from Desenzano, to your  
Sirmione row!

So they row'd, and there we landed —  
'O venusta Sirmio!'

There to me thro' all the groves of olive  
in the summer glow,

There beneath the Roman ruin where  
the purple flowers grow,

Came that 'Ave atque Vale' of the Poet's  
hopeless woe,

Tenderest of Roman poets nineteen  
hundred years ago,

'Frater Ave atque Vale,' — as we wan-  
der'd to and fro,

Gazing at the Lydian laughter of the  
Garda Lake below,

Sweet Catullus's all-but-island, olive-  
silvery Sirmio!

HELEN'S TOWER.<sup>1</sup>

HELEN'S TOWER, here I stand,  
Dominant over sea and land.

Son's love built me, and I hold  
Mother's love in letter'd gold.

Love is in and out of time,  
I am mortal stone and lime.

Would my granite girth were strong  
As either love, to last as long!

<sup>1</sup> Written at the request of my friend, Lord Dufferin.

I should wear my crown entire  
To and thro' the Doomsday fire,  
And be found of angel eyes  
In earth's recurring Paradise.

EPITAPH ON LORD STRATFORD  
DE REDCLIFFE.

IN WESTMINSTER ABBEY.

THOU third great Canning, stand among  
our best  
And noblest, now thy long day's work  
hath ceased,  
Here silent in our Minster of the West  
Who wert the voice of England in the  
East.

EPITAPH  
ON GENERAL GORDON.

IN THE GORDON BOYS' NATIONAL  
MEMORIAL HOME NEAR WOKING.

WARRIOR of God, man's friend, and  
tyrant's foe,  
Now somewhere dead far in the waste  
Soudan,  
Thou livest in all hearts, for all men  
know  
This earth has never borne a nobler  
man.

EPITAPH ON CAXTON.

IN ST. MARGARET'S, WESTMINSTER.

FIAT LUX (his motto).

THY prayer was 'Light—more Light—  
while Time shall last!'  
Thou sawest a glory growing on the night,  
But not the shadows which that light  
would cast,  
Till shadows vanish in the Light of Light.

TO THE DUKE OF ARGYLL.

O PATRIOT Statesman, be thou wise to  
know  
The limits of resistance, and the bounds  
Determining concession; still be bold  
Not only to slight praise but suffer scorn;

And be thy heart a fortress to maintain  
The day against the moment, and the  
year  
Against the day; thy voice, a music  
heard  
Thro' all the yells and counter-yells of  
feud  
And faction, and thy will, a power to  
make  
This ever-changing world of circumstance,  
In changing, chime with never-changing  
Law.

HANDS ALL ROUND.

FIRST pledge our Queen this solemn  
night,  
Then drink to England, every guest;  
That man's the best Cosmopolite  
Who loves his native country best.  
May freedom's oak for ever live  
With stronger life from day to day;  
That man's the true Conservative  
Who lops the moulder'd branch away.  
Hands all round!  
God the traitor's hope confound!  
To this great cause of Freedom drink,  
my friends,  
And the great name of England, round  
and round.

To all the loyal hearts who long  
To keep our English Empire whole!  
To all our noble sons, the strong  
New England of the Southern Pole!  
To England under Indian skies,  
To those dark millions of her realm!  
To Canada whom we love and prize,  
Whatever statesman hold the helm.  
Hands all round!  
God the traitor's hope confound!  
To this great name of England drink,  
my friends,  
And all her glorious empire, round and  
round.

To all our statesmen so they be  
True leaders of the land's desire!  
To both our Houses, may they see  
Beyond the borough and the shire!  
We sail'd wherever ship could sail,  
We founded many a mighty state;



Pray God our greatness may not fail  
 Thro' craven fears of being great.  
 Hands all round!  
 God the traitor's hope confound!  
 To this great cause of Freedom drink,  
 my friends,  
 And the great name of England, round  
 and round.

## FREEDOM.

## I.

O THOU so fair in summers gone,  
 While yet thy fresh and virgin soul  
 Inform'd the pillar'd Parthenon,  
 The glittering Capitol;

## II.

So fair in southern sunshine bathed,  
 But scarce of such majestic mien  
 As here with forehead vapour-swathed  
 In meadows ever green;

## III.

For thou—when Athens reign'd and  
 Rome,  
 Thy glorious eyes were dimm'd with  
 pain  
 To mark in many a freeman's home  
 The slave, the scourge, the chain;

## IV.

O follower of the Vision, still  
 In motion to the distant gleam,  
 Howe'er blind force and brainless will  
 May jar thy golden dream

## V.

Of Knowledge fusing class with class,  
 Of civic Hate no more to be,  
 Of Love to leaven all the mass,  
 Till every Soul be free;

## VI.

Who yet, like Nature, wouldst not mar  
 By changes all too fierce and fast  
 This order of Her Human Star,  
 This heritage of the past;

## VII.

O scorner of the party cry  
 That wanders from the public good,  
 Thou—when the nations rear on high  
 Their idol smear'd with blood,

## VIII.

And when they roll their idol down—  
 Of saner worship sanely proud;  
 Thou loather of the lawless crown  
 As of the lawless crowd;

## IX.

How long thine ever-growing mind  
 Hath still'd the blast and strown the  
 wave,  
 Tho' some of late would raise a wind  
 To sing thee to thy grave,

## X.

Men loud against all forms of power—  
 Unfurnish'd brows, tempestuous  
 tongues—  
 Expecting all things in an hour—  
 Brass mouths and iron lungs!

TO H.R.H. PRINCESS  
BEATRICE.

Two Suns of Love make day of human  
 life,  
 Which else with all its pains, and griefs,  
 and deaths,  
 Were utter darkness— one, the Sun of  
 dawn  
 That brightens thro' the Mother's tender  
 eyes,  
 And warms the child's awakening world  
 — and one  
 The later-rising Sun of spousal Love,  
 Which from her household orbit draws  
 the child  
 To move in other spheres. The Mother  
 weeps  
 At that white funeral of the single life,  
 Her maiden daughter's marriage; and  
 her tears  
 Are half of pleasure, half of pain—the  
 child  
 Is happy— ev'n in leaving *her!* but Thou,

True daughter, whose all-faithful, filial eyes  
 Have seen the loneliness of earthly  
 thrones,  
 Wilt neither quit the widow'd Crown,  
 nor let  
 This later light of Love have risen in vain,  
 But moving thro' the Mother's home,  
 between  
 The two that love thee, lead a summer life,  
 Sway'd by each Love, and swaying to  
 each Love,  
 Like some conjectured planet in mid  
 heaven  
 Between two Suns, and drawing down  
 from both  
 The light and genial warmth of double day.

THE FLEET.<sup>1</sup>

## I.

You, you, *if* you shall fail to understand  
 What England is, and what her all-in-all,  
 On you will come the curse of all the land,  
 Should this old England fall  
 Which Nelson left so great.

## II.

His isle, the mightiest Ocean-power on  
 earth,  
 Our own fair isle, the lord of every  
 sea —

<sup>1</sup> The speaker said that 'he should like to be assured that other outlying portions of the Empire, the Crown colonies, and important coaling stations were being as promptly and as thoroughly fortified as the various capitals of the self-governing colonies. He was credibly informed this was not so. It was impossible, also, not to feel some degree of anxiety about the efficacy of present provision to defend and protect, by means of swift well-armed cruisers, the immense mercantile fleet of the Empire. A third source of anxiety, so far as the colonies were concerned, was the apparently insufficient provision for the rapid manufacture of armaments and their prompt despatch when ordered to their colonial destination. Hence the necessity for manufacturing appliances equal to the requirements, not of Great Britain alone, but of the whole Empire. But the keystone of the whole was the necessity for an overwhelmingly powerful fleet and efficient defence for all necessary coaling stations. This was as essential for the colonies as for Great Britain. It was the one condition

Her fuller franchise — what would that  
 be worth —  
 Her ancient fame of Free —  
 Were she . . . a fallen state?

## III.

Her dauntless army scatter'd, and so  
 small,  
 Her island-myriads fed from alien  
 lands —  
 The fleet of England is her all-in-all;  
 Her fleet is in your hands,  
 And in her fleet her Fate.

## IV.

You, you, that have the ordering of her  
 fleet,  
*If* you should only compass her disgrace,  
 When all men starve, the wild mob's  
 million feet  
 Will kick you from your place,  
 But then too late, too late.

OPENING OF THE INDIAN AND  
 COLONIAL EXHIBITION BY THE  
 QUEEN.

*Written at the Request of the Prince  
 of Wales.*

## I.

WELCOME, welcome with one voice!  
 In your welfare we rejoice,

for the continuance of the Empire. All that Continental Powers did with respect to armies England should effect with her navy. It was essentially a defensive force, and could be moved rapidly from point to point, but it should be equal to all that was expected from it. It was to strengthen the fleet that colonists would first readily tax themselves, because they realised how essential a powerful fleet was to the safety, not only of that extensive commerce sailing in every sea, but ultimately to the security of the distant portions of the Empire. Who could estimate the loss involved in even a brief period of disaster to the Imperial Navy? Any amount of money timely expended in preparation would be quite insignificant when compared with the possible calamity he had referred to.'—*Extract from Sir Graham Berry's Speech at the Colonial Institute, 9th November 1886.*

Sons and brothers that have sent,  
 From isle and cape and continent,  
 Produce of your field and flood,  
 Mount and mine, and primal wood;  
 Works of subtle brain and hand,  
 And splendours of the morning land  
 Gifts from every British zone;  
 Britons, hold your own!

## II.

May we find, as ages run,  
 The mother featured in the son;  
 And may yours for ever be  
 That old strength and constancy  
 Which has made your fathers great  
 In our ancient island State,  
 And wherever her flag fly,  
 Glorying between sea and sky,  
 Makes the might of Britain known;  
 Britons, hold your own!

## III.

Britain fought her sons of yore —  
 Britain fail'd; and never more,  
 Careless of our growing kin,  
 Shall we sin our fathers' sin,  
 Men that in a narrower day —  
 Unprophetic rulers they —  
 Drove from out the mother's nest  
 That young eagle of the West  
 To forage for herself alone;  
 Britons, hold your own!

## IV.

Sharers of our glorious past,  
 Brothers, must we part at last?  
 Shall we not thro' good and ill  
 Cleave to one another still?  
 Britain's myriad voices call,  
 'Sons, be welded each and all,  
 Into one imperial whole,  
 One with Britain, heart and soul!  
 One life, one flag, one fleet, one Throne!  
 Britons, hold your own!

## POETS AND THEIR BIBLIOGRAPHIES.

OLD poets foster'd under friendlier skies,  
 Old Virgil who would write ten lines,  
 they say,

At dawn, and lavish all the golden day  
 To make them wealthier in his readers'  
 eyes;  
 And you, old popular Horace, you the  
 wise  
 Adviser of the nine-years-ponder'd lay  
 And you, that wear a wreath of sweeter  
 bay,  
 Catullus whose dead songster never  
 dies;  
 If, glancing downward on the kindly  
 sphere  
 That once had roll'd you round and  
 round the Sun,  
 You see your Art still shrined in  
 human shelves,  
 You should be jubilant that you flourish'd  
 here  
 Before the Love of Letters, overdone,  
 Had swampt the sacred poets with them-  
 selves.

## TO W. C. MACREADY.

1851.

FAREWELL, Macready, since to-night we  
 part;  
 Full-handed thunders often have con-  
 fess'd  
 Thy power, well-used to move the  
 public breast.  
 We thank thee with our voice, and from  
 the heart.  
 Farewell, Macready, since this night we  
 part,  
 Go, take thine honours home; rank  
 with the best,  
 Garrick and statelier Kemble, and  
 the rest  
 Who made a nation purer through their  
 art.  
 Thine is it that our drama did not die,  
 Nor flicker down to brainless panto-  
 mime,  
 And those gilt gauds men-children  
 swarm to see.  
 Farewell, Macready; moral, grave, sub-  
 lime;  
 Our Shakespeare's bland and universal  
 eye  
 Dwells pleased, through twice a  
 hundred years, on thee.

# QUEEN MARY:

## A DRAMA.

### DRAMATIS PERSONÆ.

QUEEN MARY.

PHILIP, *King of Naples and Sicily, afterwards King of Spain.*

THE PRINCESS ELIZABETH.

REGINALD POLE, *Cardinal and Papal Legate.*

SIMON RENARD, *Spanish Ambassador.*

LE SIEUR DE NOAILLES, *French Ambassador.*

THOMAS CRANMER, *Archbishop of Canterbury.*

SIR NICHOLAS HEATH, *Archbishop of York; Lord Chancellor after Gardiner.*

EDWARD COURTENAY, *Earl of Devon.*

LORD WILLIAM HOWARD, *afterwards Lord Howard, and Lord High Admiral.*

LORD WILLIAMS OF THAME.

LORD PAGET.

LORD PETRE.

STEPHEN GARDINER, *Bishop of Winchester and Lord Chancellor.*

EDMUND BONNER, *Bishop of London.*

THOMAS THIRLBY, *Bishop of Ely.*

SIR THOMAS WYATT } *Insurrectionary Leaders.*

SIR THOMAS STAFFORD }

SIR RALPH BAGENHALL.

SIR ROBERT SOUTHWELL.

SIR HENRY BEDINGFIELD.

SIR WILLIAM CECIL.

SIR THOMAS WHITE, *Lord Mayor of London.*

THE DUKE OF ALVA } *attending on Philip.*

THE COUNT DE FERIA }

FATHER COLE.

FATHER BOURNE.

PETER MARTYR.

SOTO.

CAPTAIN BRETT } *Adherents of Wyatt.*

ANTHONY KNYVETT }

PETERS, *Gentleman of Lord Howard.*

ROGER, *Servant to Noailles.*

WILLIAM, *Servant to Wyatt.*

STEWARD OF HOUSEHOLD *to the Princess Elizabeth.*

OLD NOKES and NOKES.

MARCHIONESS OF EXETER, *Mother of Courtenay.*

LADY CLARENCE

LADY MAGDALEN DACRES } *Ladies in Waiting to the Queen.*

ALICE

MAID OF HONOUR *to the Princess Elizabeth.*

JOAN } *two Country Wives.*

TIB }

Lords and other Attendants, Members of the Privy Council, Members of Parliament, Two Gentlemen, Aldermen, Citizens, Peasants, Ushers, Messengers, Guards, Pages, Gospellers, Marshalsmen, etc.

### ACT I.

SCENE I. — ALDGATE RICHLI  
DECORATED.

CROWD. MARSHALMEN.

*Marshalman.* Stand back, keep a clear lane! When will her Majesty pass, sayst thou? why now, even now; wherefore draw back your heads and

your horns before I break them, and make what noise you will with your tongues, so it be not treason. Long live Queen Mary, the lawful and legitimate daughter of Harry the Eighth! Shout, knives!

*Citizens.* Long live Queen Mary!

*First Citizen.* That's a hard word, legitimate; what does it mean?

*Second Citizen.* It means a bastard.

*Third Citizen.* Nay, it means true-born.

*First Citizen.* Why, didn't the Parliament make her a bastard?

*Second Citizen.* No; it was the Lady Elizabeth.

*Third Citizen.* That was after, man; that was after.

*First Citizen.* Then which is the bastard?

*Second Citizen.* Troth, they be both bastards by Act of Parliament and Council.

*Third Citizen.* Ay, the Parliament can make every true-born man of us a bastard. Old Nokes, can't it make thee a bastard? thou shouldst know, for thou art as white as three Christmasses.

*Old Nokes (dreamily).* Who's a-passing? King Edward or King Richard?

*Third Citizen.* No, old Nokes.

*Old Nokes.* It's Harry!

*Third Citizen.* It's Queen Mary.

*Old Nokes.* The blessed Mary's a-passing! [*Falls on his knees.*]

*Nokes.* Let father alone, my masters! he's past your questioning.

*Third Citizen.* Answer thou for him, then! thou'rt no such cockerel thyself, for thou wast born i' the tail end of old Harry the Seventh.

*Nokes.* Eh! that was afore bastard-making began. I was born true man at five in the forenoon i' the tail of old Harry, and so they can't make me a bastard.

*Third Citizen.* But if Parliament can make the Queen a bastard, why, it follows all the more that they can make thee one, who art fray'd i' the knees, and out at elbow, and bald o' the back, and bursten at the toes, and down at heels.

*Nokes.* I was born of a true man and a ring'd wife, and I can't argue upon it; but I and my old woman 'ud burn upon it, that would we.

*Marshalman.* What are you cackling of bastardy under the Queen's own nose? I'll have you flogg'd and burnt too, by the Rood I will.

*First Citizen.* He swears by the Rood. Whew!

*Second Citizen.* Hark! the trumpets.

[*The Procession passes, Mary and Elizabeth riding side by side, and disappears under the gate.*]

*Citizens.* Long live Queen Mary! down with all traitors! God save her Grace; and death to Northumberland!

[*Exeunt.*]

Manent TWO GENTLEMEN.

*First Gentleman.* By God's light a noble creature, right royal!

*Second Gentleman.* She looks comelier than ordinary to-day; but to my mind the Lady Elizabeth is the more noble and royal.

*First Gentleman.* I mean the Lady Elizabeth. Did you hear (I have a daughter in her service who reported it) that she met the Queen at Wanstead with five hundred horse, and the Queen (tho' some say they be much divided) took her hand, call'd her sweet sister, and kiss'd not her alone, but all the ladies of her following.

*Second Gentleman.* Ay, that was in her hour of joy; there will be plenty to sunder and insister them again: this Gardiner for one, who is to be made Lord Chancellor, and will pounce like a wild beast out of his cage to worry Cranmer.

*First Gentleman.* And furthermore, my daughter said that when there rose a talk of the late rebellion, she spoke even of Northumberland pitifully, and of the good Lady Jane as a poor innocent child who had but obeyed her father; and furthermore, she said that no one in her time should be burnt for heresy.

*Second Gentleman.* Well, sir, I look for happy times.

*First Gentleman.* There is but one thing against them. I know not if you know.

*Second Gentleman.* I suppose you touch upon the rumour that Charles, the master of the world, has offer'd her his son Philip, the Pope and the Devil. I trust it is but a rumour.

*First Gentleman.* She is going now to the Tower to loose the prisoners there, and among them Courtenay, to be made Earl of Devon, of royal blood, of splendid

feature, whom the council and all her people wish her to marry. May it be so, for we are many of us Catholics, but few Papists, and the Hot Gospellers will go mad upon it.

*Second Gentleman.* Was she not betroth'd in her babyhood to the Great Emperor himself?

*First Gentleman.* Ay, but he's too old.

*Second Gentleman.* And again to her cousin Reginald Pole, now Cardinal; but I hear that he too is full of aches and broken before his day.

*First Gentleman.* O, the Pope could dispense with his Cardinalate, and his achage, and his breakage, if that were all: will you not follow the procession?

*Second Gentleman.* No; I have seen enough for this day.

*First Gentleman.* Well, I shall follow; if I can get near enough I shall judge with my own eyes whether her Grace incline to this splendid scion of Plantagenet.

[*Exeunt.*]

## SCENE II.

### A ROOM IN LAMBETH PALACE.

*Cranmer.* To Strasburg, Antwerp, Frankfort, Zurich, Worms, Geneva, Basle—our Bishops from their sees  
Or fled, they say, or flying—Poinet, Barlow,  
Bale, Scory, Coverdale; besides the Deans  
Of Christchurch, Durham, Exeter, and Wells—  
Ailmer and Bullingham, and hundreds more;  
So they report: I shall be left alone.  
No: Hooper, Ridley, Latimer will not fly.

*Enter* PETER MARTYR.

*Peter Martyr.* Fly, Cranmer! were there nothing else, your name  
Stands first of those who sign'd the Letters Patent

That gave her royal crown to Lady Jane.

*Cranmer.* Stand first it may, but it was written last:

Those that are now her Privy Council, sign'd

Before me: nay, the Judges had pronounced

That our young Edward might bequeath the crown

Of England, putting by his father's will.

Yet I stood out, till Edward sent for me.

The wan boy-king, with his fast-fading eyes

Fixt hard on mine, his frail transparent hand,

Damp with the sweat of death, and griping mine,

Whisper'd me, if I loved him, not to yield

His Church of England to the Papal wolf

And Mary; then I could no more—I sign'd.

Nay, for bare shame of inconsistency, She cannot pass her traitor council by, To make me headless.

*Peter Martyr.* That might be forgiven. I tell you, fly, my Lord. You do not own

The bodily presence in the Eucharist,

Their wafer and perpetual sacrifice:

Your creed will be your death.

*Cranmer.* Step after step, Thro' many voices crying right and left,

Have I climb'd back into the primal church,

And stand within the porch, and Christ with me:

My flight were such a scandal to the faith,

The downfall of so many simple souls,

I dare not leave my post.

*Peter Martyr.* But you divorced Queen Catharine and her father; hence,

her hate  
Will burn till you are burn'd.

*Cranmer.* I cannot help it. The Canonists and Schoolmen were with me.

'Thou shalt not wed thy brother's wife.'

—'Tis written,  
'They shall be childless.' True, Mary was born,

But France would not accept her for a bride

As being born from incest; and this wrought

Upon the king; and child by child, you know,

Were momentary sparkles out as quick  
Almost as kindled; and he brought his doubts



And fears to me. Peter, I'll swear for him

He *did* believe the bond incestuous.

But wherefore am I trenching on the time

That should already have seen your steps a mile

From me and Lambeth? God be with you! Go.

*Peter Martyr.* Ah, but how fierce a letter you wrote against

Their superstition when they slander'd you

For setting up a mass at Canterbury

To please the Queen.

*Cranmer.* It was a wheedling monk Set up the mass.

*Peter Martyr.* I know it, my good Lord.

But you so bubbled over with hot terms

Of Satan, liars, blasphemy, Antichrist,

She never will forgive you. Fly, my Lord, fly!

*Cranmer.* I wrote it, and God grant me power to burn!

*Peter Martyr.* They have given me a safe conduct: for all that

I dare not stay. I fear, I fear, I see you,

Dear friend, for the last time; farewell, and fly.

*Cranmer.* Fly and farewell, and let me die the death.

[*Exit Peter Martyr.*]

*Enter OLD SERVANT.*

O kind and gentle master, the Queen's Officers

Are here in force to take you to the Tower.

*Cranmer.* Ay, gentle friend, admit them. I will go.

I thank my God it is too late to fly.

[*Exeunt.*]

SCENE III.—ST. PAUL'S CROSS.

FATHER BOURNE *in the pulpit.* A crowd.

MARCHIONESS OF EXETER, COURTENAY. The SIEUR DE NOAILLES and his man ROGER *in front of the stage.*

*Hubbub.*

*Noailles.* Hast thou let fall those papers in the palace?

*Roger.* Ay, sir.

*Noailles.* 'There will be no peace for Mary till Elizabeth lose her head.'

*Roger.* Ay, sir.

*Noailles.* And the other, 'Long live Elizabeth the Queen!'

*Roger.* Ay, sir; she needs must tread upon them.

*Noailles.* Well.

These beastly swine make such a grunting here,

I cannot catch what Father Bourne is saying.

*Roger.* Quiet a moment, my masters; hear what the shaveling has to say for himself.

*Crowd.* Hush—hear!

*Bourne.*—and so this unhappy land, long divided in itself, and sever'd from the faith, will return into the one true fold, seeing that our gracious Virgin Queen hath—

*Crowd.* No pope! no pope!

*Roger (to those about him, mimicking Bourne).*—hath sent for the holy legate of the holy father the Pope, Cardinal Pole, to give us all that holy absolution which—

*First Citizen.* Old Bourne to the life!

*Second Citizen.* Holy absolution! holy Inquisition!

*Third Citizen.* Down with the Papist!

[*Hubbub.*]

*Bourne.*—and now that your good bishop, Bonner, who hath lain so long under bonds for the faith—

[*Hubbub.*]

*Noailles.* Friend Roger, steal thou in among the crowd,

And get the swine to shout Elizabeth. Yon gray old Gospeller, sour as midwinter, Begin with him.

*Roger (goes).* By the mass, old friend, we'll have no pope here while the Lady Elizabeth lives.

*Gospeller.* Art thou of the true faith, fellow, that swearest by the mass?

*Roger.* Ay, that am I, new converted, but the old leaven sticks to my tongue yet.

*First Citizen.* He says right; by the mass we'll have no mass here.

*Voices of the crowd.* Peace! hear him;

let his own words damn the Papist. From thine own mouth I judge thee — tear him down!

*Bourne.* — and since our Gracious Queen, let me call her our second Virgin Mary, hath begun to re-edify the true temple —

*First Citizen.* Virgin Mary! we'll have no virgins here — we'll have the Lady Elizabeth!

[*Swords are drawn, a knife is hurled and sticks in the pulpit. The mob throng to the pulpit stairs.*]

*Marchioness of Exeter.* Son Courtenay, wilt thou see the holy father Murdered before thy face? up, son, and save him!

They love thee, and thou canst not come to harm.

*Courtenay (in the pulpit).* Shame, shame, my masters! are you English-born,

And set yourselves by hundreds against one?

*Crowd.* A Courtenay! a Courtenay!

[*A train of Spanish servants crosses at the back of the stage.*]

*Noailles.* These birds of passage come before their time:

Stave off the crowd upon the Spaniard there.

*Roger.* My masters, yonder's fatter game for you

Than this old gaping gurgoyle: look you there —

The Prince of Spain coming to wed our Queen!

After him, boys! and pelt him from the city.

[*They seize stones and follow the Spaniards. Exeunt on the other side Marchioness of Exeter and Attendants.*]

*Noailles (to Roger).* Stand from me. If Elizabeth lose her head —

That makes for France. And if her people, anger'd thereupon, Arise against her and dethrone the Queen —

That makes for France. And if I breed confusion anyway — That makes for France.

Good-day, my Lord of Devon;

A bold heart yours to beard that raging mob!

*Courtenay.* My mother said, Go up; and up I went.

I knew they would not do me any wrong, For I am mighty popular with them, Noailles.

*Noailles.* You look'd a king.

*Courtenay.* Why not? I am king's blood.

*Noailles.* And in the whirl of change may come to be one.

*Courtenay.* Ah!

*Noailles.* But does your gracious Queen entreat you kinglike?

*Courtenay.* 'Fore God, I think she entreats me like a child.

*Noailles.* You've but a dull life in this maiden court,

I fear, my Lord?

*Courtenay.* A life of nods and yawns.

*Noailles.* So you would honour my poor house to-night,

We might enliven you. Divers honest fellows,

The Duke of Suffolk lately freed from prison,

Sir Peter Carew and Sir Thomas Wyatt, Sir Thomas Stafford, and some more — we play.

*Courtenay.* At what?

*Noailles.* The Game of Chess.

*Courtenay.* The Game of Chess! I can play well, and I shall beat you there.

*Noailles.* Ay, but we play with Henry, King of France,

And certain of his court.

His Highness makes his moves across the Channel,

We answer him with ours, and there are messengers

That go between us.

*Courtenay.* Why, such a game, sir, were whole years a playing.

*Noailles.* Nay; not so long I trust. That all depends

Upon the skill and swiftness of the players.

*Courtenay.* The King is skilful at it?

*Noailles.* Very, my Lord.

*Courtenay.* And the stakes high?

*Noailles.* But not beyond your means.

*Courtenay.* Well, I'm the first of players. I shall win.

*Noailles.* With our advice and in our company,  
And so you well attend to the king's moves,  
I think you may.

*Courtenay.* When do you meet?

*Noailles.* To-night.

*Courtenay (aside).* I will be there;  
the fellow's at his tricks—

Deep—I shall fathom him. (*Aloud.*)  
Good morning, *Noailles.*

[*Exit Courtenay.*]

*Noailles.* Good-day, my Lord. Strange  
game of chess! a King

That with her own pawns plays against a  
Queen,

Whose play is all to find herself a King.  
Ay; but this fine blue-blooded *Courtenay*  
seems

Too princely for a pawn. Call him a  
Knight,

That, with an ass's, not a horse's head,  
Skips every way, from levity or from fear.

Well, we shall use him somehow, so that  
Gardiner

And *Simon Renard* spy not out our game  
Too early. *Roger*, thinkest thou that  
anyone

Suspected thee to be my man?

*Roger.* Not one, sir.

*Noailles.* No! the disguise was perfect.

Let's away. [*Exeunt.*]

#### SCENE IV.

LONDON. A ROOM IN THE PALACE.

ELIZABETH. *Enter COURTENAY.*

*Courtenay.* So yet am I,  
Unless my friends and mirrors lie to me,  
A goodlier-looking fellow than this *Philip*.  
Pah!

The Queen is ill advised: shall I turn  
traitor?

They've almost talked me into it: yet the  
word

Affrights me somewhat: to be such a one  
As *Harry Bolingbroke* hath a lure in it.

Good now, my Lady Queen, tho' by your  
age,

And by your looks you are not worth the  
having,

Yet by your crown you are.

[*Seeing Elizabeth.*]

The Princess there?

If I tried her and la—she's amorous.  
Have we not heard of her in *Edward's*  
time,

Her freaks and frolics with the late Lord  
Admiral?

I do believe she'd yield. I should be  
still

A party in the state; and then, who  
knows—

*Elizabeth.* What are you musing on,  
my Lord of Devon?

*Courtenay.* Has not the Queen—

*Elizabeth.* Done what, Sir?

*Courtenay.*—made you follow

The Lady *Suffolk* and the Lady *Lennox*?—  
You,

The heir presumptive.

*Elizabeth.* Why do you ask? you  
know it.

*Courtenay.* You needs must bear it  
hardly.

*Elizabeth.* No, indeed!

I am utterly submissive to the Queen.

*Courtenay.* Well, I was musing upon  
that; the Queen

Is both my foe and yours: we should be  
friends.

*Elizabeth.* My Lord, the hatred of  
another to us

Is no true bond of friendship.

*Courtenay.* Might it not  
Be the rough preface of some closer bond?

*Elizabeth.* My Lord, you late were  
loosed from out the Tower,

Where, like a butterfly in a chrysalis,  
You spent your life; that broken, out  
you flutter

Thro' the new world, go zigzag, now  
would settle

Upon this flower, now that; but all things  
here

At court are known; you have solicited  
The Queen, and been rejected.

*Courtenay.* Flower, she!

Half faded! but you, cousin, are fresh and  
sweet

As the first flower no bee has ever tried.

*Elizabeth.* Are you the bee to try me?  
why, but now

I called you butterfly.

*Courtenay.* You did me wrong,  
I love not to be called a butterfly:  
Why do you call me butterfly?

*Elizabeth.* Why do you go so gay  
then?

*Courtenay.* Velvet and gold.  
This dress was made me as the Earl of  
Devon  
To take my seat in; looks it not right  
royal?

*Elizabeth.* So royal that the Queen  
forbade you wearing it.

*Courtenay.* I wear it then to spite  
her.

*Elizabeth.* My Lord, my Lord;  
I see you in the Tower again. Her  
Majesty

Hears you affect the Prince — prelates  
kneel to you. —

*Courtenay.* I am the noblest blood  
in Europe, Madam,  
A Courtenay of Devon, and her cousin.

*Elizabeth.* She hears you make your  
boast that after all  
She means to wed you. Folly, my good  
Lord.

*Courtenay.* How folly? a great party  
in the state  
Wills me to wed her.

*Elizabeth.* Failing her, my Lord,  
Doth not as great a party in the state  
Will you to wed me?

*Courtenay.* Even so, fair lady.

*Elizabeth.* You know to flatter ladies.

*Courtenay.* Nay, I meant  
True matters of the heart.

*Elizabeth.* My heart, my Lord,  
Is no great party in the state as yet.

*Courtenay.* Great, said you? nay, you  
shall be great. I love you,  
Lay my life in your hands. Can you be  
close?

*Elizabeth.* Can you, my Lord?

*Courtenay.* Close as a miser's casket.  
Listen:

The King of France, Noailles the Am-  
bassador,  
The Duke of Suffolk and Sir Peter Carew,  
Sir Thomas Wyatt, I myself, some others,  
Have sworn this Spanish marriage shall  
not be.

If Mary will not hear us — well — con-  
jecture —

Were I in Devon with my wedded bride,  
The people there so worship me — Your  
ear;

You shall be Queen.

*Elizabeth.* You speak too low,  
my Lord;

I cannot hear you.

*Courtenay.* I'll repeat it.

*Elizabeth.* No!  
Stand further off, or you may lose your  
head.

*Courtenay.* I have a head to lose for  
your sweet sake.

*Elizabeth.* Have you, my Lord? Best  
keep it for your own.

Nay, pout not, cousin.

Not many friends are mine, except indeed  
Among the many. I believe you mine;  
And so you may continue mine, farewell,  
And that at once.

*Enter MARY, behind.*

*Mary.* Whispering — leagued together  
To bar me from my Philip.

*Courtenay.* Pray — consider —

*Elizabeth (seeing the Queen).* Well,  
that's a noble horse of yours, my  
Lord.

I trust that he will carry you well to-day,  
And heal your headache.

*Courtenay.* You are wild; what head-  
ache?

Heartache, perchance; not headache.

*Elizabeth (aside to Courtenay).* Are  
you blind?

[*Courtenay sees the Queen and exit.*  
*Exit Mary.*

*Enter LORD WILLIAM HOWARD.*

*Howard.* Was that my Lord of Devon?  
do not you

Be seen in corners with my Lord of  
Devon.

He hath fallen out of favour with the  
Queen.

She fears the Lords may side with you  
and him

Against her marriage; therefore is he  
dangerous.

And if this Prince of fluff and feather  
come

To woo you, niece, he is dangerous every  
way.

*Elizabeth.* Not very dangerous that way, my good uncle.

*Howard.* But your own state is full of danger here.

The disaffected, heretics, reformers, Look to you as the one to crown their ends.

Mix not yourself with any plot I pray you;

Nay, if by chance you hear of any such, Speak not thereof—no, not to your best friend,

Lest you should be confounded with it. Still—

Perinde ac cadaver—as the priest says, You know your Latin—quiet as a dead body.

What was my Lord of Devon telling you?

*Elizabeth.* Whether he told me anything or not,

I follow your good counsel, gracious uncle.

Quiet as a dead body.

*Howard.* You do right well. I do not care to know; but this I charge you,

Tell Courtenay nothing. The Lord Chancellor

(I count it as a kind of virtue in him, He hath not many), as a mastiff dog May love a puppy cur for no more reason Than that the twain have been tied up together,

Thus Gardiner—for the two were fellow-prisoners

So many years in yon accursed Tower—Hath taken to this Courtenay. Look to it, niece,

He hath no fence when Gardiner questions him;

All oozes out; yet him—because they know him

The last White Rose, the last Plantagenet (Nay, there is Cardinal Pole, too), the people

Claim as their natural leader—ay, some say,

That you shall marry him, make him King belike.

*Elizabeth.* Do they say so, good uncle?

*Howard.* Ay, good niece!

You should be plain and open with me, niece.

You should not play upon me.

*Elizabeth.* No, good uncle.

*Enter* GARDINER.

*Gardiner.* The Queen would see your Grace upon the moment.

*Elizabeth.* Why, my lord Bishop?

*Gardiner.* I think she means to counsel your withdrawing

To Ashridge, or some other country house.

*Elizabeth.* Why, my lord Bishop?

*Gardiner.* I do but bring the message, know no more.

Your Grace will hear her reasons from herself.

*Elizabeth.* 'Tis mine own wish fulfill'd before the word

Was spoken, for in truth I had meant to crave

Permission of her Highness to retire To Ashridge, and pursue my studies there.

*Gardiner.* Madam, to have the wish before the word

Is man's good Fairy—and the Queen is yours.

I left her with rich jewels in her hand, Whereof 'tis like enough she means to make

A farewell present to your Grace.

*Elizabeth.* My Lord,

I have the jewel of a loyal heart.

*Gardiner.* I doubt it not, Madam, most loyal. [*Bows low and exit.*]

*Howard.* See,

This comes of parleying with my Lord of Devon.

Well, well, you must obey; and I myself Believe it will be better for your welfare. Your time will come.

*Elizabeth.* I think my time will come.

Uncle,

I am of sovereign nature, that I know, Not to be quell'd; and I have felt within me

Stirrings of some great doom when God's just hour

Peals—but this fierce old Gardiner—his big baldness,

That irritable forelock which he rubs,

His buzzard beak and deep-incavern'd eyes  
Half fright me.

*Howard.* You've a bold heart; keep it so.

He cannot touch you save that you turn traitor;

And so take heed I pray you — you are one

Who love that men should smile upon you, niece.

They'd smile you into treason — some of them.

*Elizabeth.* I spy the rock beneath the smiling sea.

But if this Philip, the proud Catholic prince,

And this bald priest, and she that hates me, seek

In that lone house, to practise on my life,

By poison, fire, shot, stab —

*Howard.* They will not, niece. Mine is the fleet and all the power at sea —

Or will be in a moment. If they dared To harm you, I would blow this Philip and all

Your trouble to the dogstar and the devil.

*Elizabeth.* To the Pleiads, uncle; they have lost a sister.

*Howard.* But why say that? what have you done to lose her?

Come, come, I will go with you to the Queen. [*Exeunt.*]

#### SCENE V.

A ROOM IN THE PALACE.

MARY *with PHILIP'S miniature.* ALICE.

*Mary (kissing the miniature).* Most goodly, Kinglike and an Emperor's son, —

A king to be, — is he not noble, girl?

*Alice.* Goodly enough, your Grace, and yet, methinks,

I have seen goodlier.

*Mary.* Ay; some waxen doll Thy baby eyes have rested on, belike; All red and white, the fashion of our land.

But my good mother came (God rest her soul)

Of Spain, and I am Spanish in myself, And in my likings.

*Alice.* By your Grace's leave Your royal mother came of Spain, but took

To the English red and white. Your royal father

(For so they say) was all pure lily and rose

In his youth, and like a lady.

*Mary.* O just God! Sweet mother, you had time and cause enough

To sicken of his lilies and his roses.

Cast off, betray'd, defamed, divorced, forlorn!

And then the King — that traitor past forgiveness,

The false archbishop fawning on him, married

The mother of Elizabeth — a heretic Ev'n as *she* is; but God hath sent me here

To take such order with all heretics

That it shall be, before I die, as tho'

My father and my brother had not lived. What wast thou saying of this Lady

Jane,

Now in the Tower?

*Alice.* Why, Madam, she was passing Some chapel down in Essex, and with her

Lady Anne Wharton, and the Lady Anne Bow'd to the Pyx; but Lady Jane stood

up

Stiff as the very backbone of heresy.

And wherefore bow ye not, says Lady Anne,

To him within there who made Heaven and Earth?

I cannot and I dare not tell your Grace What Lady Jane replied.

*Mary.* But I will have it.

*Alice.* She said — pray pardon me, and pity her —

She hath harken'd evil counsel — ah! she said,

The baker made him.

*Mary.* Monstrous! blasphemous! She ought to burn. Hence, thou. (*Exit Alice.*) No — being traitor



Her head will fall: shall it? she is but  
a child.

We do not kill the child for doing that  
His father whipt him into doing—a head  
So full of grace and beauty! would that  
mine

Were half as gracious! .O my lord to be,  
My love, for thy sake only.

I am eleven years older than he is.

But will he care for that?

No, by the holy Virgin, being noble,  
But love me only: then the bastard  
sprout,

My sister, is far fairer than myself.

Will he be drawn to her?

No, being of the true faith with myself.

Paget is for him—for to wed with Spain  
Would treble England—Gardiner is  
against him;

The Council, people, Parliament against  
him;

But I will have him! My hard father  
hated me;

My brother rather hated me than loved;

My sister cowers and hates me. Holy  
Virgin,

Plead with thy blessed Son; grant me  
my prayer:

Give me my Philip; and we two will  
lead

The living waters of the Faith again  
Back thro' their widow'd channel here,  
and watch

The parch'd banks rolling incense, as of  
old,

To heaven, and kindled with the palms  
of Christ!

*Enter USHER.*

Who waits, sir?

*Usher.* Madam, the Lord Chancellor.

*Mary.* Bid him come in. (*Enter*  
GARDINER.) Good morning, my  
good Lord. [*Exit Usher.*

*Gardiner.* That every morning of your  
Majesty

May be most good, is every morning's  
prayer

Of your most loyal subject, Stephen  
Gardiner.

*Mary.* Come you to tell me this, my  
Lord?

*Gardiner.* And more.

Your people have begun to learn your  
worth.

Your pious wish to pay King Edward's  
debts,

Your lavish household curb'd, and the  
remission

Of half that subsidy levied on the people,  
Make all tongues praise and all hearts  
beat for you.

I'd have you yet more loved: the realm  
is poor,

The exchequer at neap-tide: we might  
withdraw

Part of our garrison at Calais.

*Mary.* Calais!

Our one point on the main, the gate of  
France!

I am Queen of England; take mine eyes,  
mine heart,

But do not lose me Calais.

*Gardiner.* Do not fear it.

Of that hereafter. I say your Grace is  
loved.

That I may keep you thus, who am your  
friend

And ever faithful counsellor, might I  
speak?

*Mary.* I can forespeak your speaking.  
Would I marry

Prince Philip, if all England hate him?  
That is

Your question, and I front it with another:  
Is it England, or a party? Now, your  
answer.

*Gardiner.* My answer is, I wear be-  
neath my dress

A shirt of mail: my house hath been  
assaulted,

And when I walk abroad, the populace,  
With fingers pointed like so many daggers,

Stab me in fancy, hissing Spain and  
Philip;

And when I sleep, a hundred men-at-  
arms

Guard my poor dreams for England.  
Men would murder me,

Because they think me favourer of this  
marriage.

*Mary.* And that were hard upon you,  
my Lord Chancellor.

*Gardiner.* But our young Earl of  
Devon—

*Mary.* Earl of Devon?

I freed him from the Tower, placed him  
at Court;

I made him Earl of Devon, and—the  
fool—

He wrecks his health and wealth on  
courtesans,

And rolls himself in carrion like a dog.

*Gardiner.* More like a schoolboy that  
hath broken bounds,

Sickenng himself with sweets.

*Mary.* I will not hear of him.  
Good, then, they will revolt: but I am

Tudor,

And shall control them.

*Gardiner.* I will help you, Madam,  
Even to the utmost. All the church is  
grateful.

You have ousted the mock priest, re-  
pulpited

The shepherd of St. Peter, raised the  
rood again,

And brought us back the mass. I am all  
thanks

To God and to your Grace: yet I know  
well,

Your people, and I go with them so far,  
Will brook nor Pope nor Spaniard here  
to play

The tyrant, or in commonwealth or  
church.

*Mary (showing the picture).* Is this the  
face of one who plays the tyrant?  
Peruse it; is it not goodly, ay, and gentle?

*Gardiner.* Madam, methinks a cold  
face and a haughty.

And when your Highness talks of Cour-  
tenay—

Ay, true—a goodly one. I would his  
life

Were half as goodly (*aside*).

*Mary.* What is that you mutter?

*Gardiner.* O Madam, take it bluntly;  
marry Philip,

And he stepmother of a score of sons!

The prince is known in Spain, in Flanders,  
ha!

For Philip—

*Mary.* You offend us; you may leave us.  
You see thro' warping glasses.

*Gardiner.* If your Majesty—

*Mary.* I have sworn upon the body  
and blood of Christ

I'll none but Philip.

*Gardiner.* Hath your Grace so sworn?

*Mary.* Ay, Simon Renard knows it.

*Gardiner.* News to me!

It then remains for your poor Gardiner,  
So you still care to trust him somewhat  
less

Than Simon Renard, to compose the  
event

In some such form as least may harm  
your Grace.

*Mary.* I'll have the scandal sounded  
to the mud.

I know it a scandal.

*Gardiner.* All my hope is now  
It may be found a scandal.

*Mary.* You offend us.

*Gardiner (aside).* These princes are  
like children, must be physick'd,  
The bitter in the sweet. I have lost  
mine office,

It may be, thro' mine honesty, like a fool.  
[*Exit.*

*Enter USHER.*

*Mary.* Who waits?

*Usher.* The Ambassador from France,  
your Grace.

*Mary (sits down).* Bid him come in.  
Good morning, Sir de Noailles.

[*Exit Usher.*

*Noailles (entering).* A happy morning  
to your Majesty.

*Mary.* And I should sometime have  
a happy morning;

I have had none yet. What says the  
King your master?

*Noailles.* Madam, my master hears  
with much alarm,

That you may marry Philip, Prince of  
Spain—

Foreseeing, with whate'er unwillingness,  
That if this Philip be the titular king  
Of England, and at war with him, your  
Grace

And kingdom will be suck'd into the war,  
Ay, tho' you long for peace; wherefore,  
my master,

If but to prove your Majesty's good will,  
Would fain have some fresh treaty drawn  
between you.

*Mary.* Why some fresh treaty? where-  
fore should I do it?

Sir, if we marry, we shall still maintain

All former treaties with his Majesty.  
Our royal word for that! and your good  
master,

Pray God he do not be the first to break  
them,

Must be content with that; and so, fare-  
well.

*Noailles* (*going, returns*). I would your  
answer had been other, Madam,  
For I foresee dark days.

*Mary*. And so do I, sir;  
Your master works against me in the dark.  
I do believe he help Northumberland  
Against me.

*Noailles*. Nay, pure phantasy, your  
Grace.

Why should he move against you?

*Mary*. Will you hear why?  
Mary of Scotland, — for I have not own'd  
My sister, and I will not, — after me  
Is heir of England; and my royal father,  
To make the crown of Scotland one with  
ours,

Had mark'd her for my brother Edward's  
bride;

Ay, but your king stole her a babe from  
Scotland

In order to betroth her to your Dauphin.  
See then:

Mary of Scotland, married to your  
Dauphin,

Would make our England, France;

Mary of England, joining hands with  
Spain,

Would be too strong for France.

Yea, were there issue born to her, Spain  
and we,

One crown, might rule the world. There  
lies your fear.

That is your drift. You play at hide and  
seek.

Show me your faces!

*Noailles*. Madam, I am amazed:  
French, I must needs wish all good  
things for France.

That must be pardon'd me; but I protest  
Your Grace's policy hath a farther flight  
Than mine into the future. We but seek  
Some settled ground for peace to stand  
upon.

*Mary*. Well, we will leave all this,  
sir, to our council.

Have you seen Philip ever?

*Noailles*. Only once.

*Mary*. Is this like Philip?

*Noailles*. Ay, but nobler-looking.

*Mary*. Hath he the large ability of  
the Emperor?

*Noailles*. No, surely.

*Mary*. I can make allowance for thee,  
Thou speakest of the enemy of thy king.

*Noailles*. Make no allowance for the  
naked truth.

He is everyway a lesser man than Charles;  
Stone-hard, ice-cold — no dash of daring  
in him.

*Mary*. If cold, his life's pure.

*Noailles*. Why (*smiling*), no, indeed.

*Mary*. Sayst thou?

*Noailles*. A very wanton life indeed  
(*smiling*).

*Mary*. Your audience is concluded,  
sir. [*Exit Noailles*].

You cannot

Learn a man's nature from his natural foe.

*Enter USHER.*

Who waits?

*Usher*. The Ambassador of Spain,  
your Grace. [*Exit*].

*Enter SIMON RENARD.*

*Mary* (*rising to meet him*). Thou  
art ever welcome, Simon Renard.

Hast thou

Brought me the letter which thine  
Emperor promised

Long since, a formal offer of the hand  
Of Philip?

*Renard*. Nay, your Grace, it hath not  
reach'd me.

I know not wherefore — some mischance  
of flood,

And broken bridge, or spavin'd horse, or  
wave

And wind at their old battle: he must  
have written.

*Mary*. But Philip never writes me  
one poor word,

Which in his absence had been all my  
wealth.

Strange in a wooer!

*Renard*. Yet I know the Prince,  
So your king-parliament suffer him to  
land,

Yearns to set foot upon your island shore.

*Mary.* God change the pebble which  
his kingly foot

First presses into some more costly stone  
Than ever blinded eye. I'll have one  
mark it

And bring it me. I'll have it burnish'd  
firelike;

I'll set it round with gold, with pearl,  
with diamond.

Let the great angel of the church come  
with him;

Stand on the deck and spread his wings  
for sail!

God lay the waves and strow the storms  
at sea,

And here at land among the people! O  
Renard,

I am much beset, I am almost in despair.  
Paget is ours. Gardiner perchance is

ours;

But for our heretic Parliament —

*Renard.* O Madam,  
You fly your thoughts like kites. My  
master, Charles,

Bade you go softly with your heretics here,  
Until your throne had ceased to tremble.

Then

Spit them like larks for aught I care.  
Besides,

When Henry broke the carcase of your  
church

To pieces, there were many wolves among  
you

Who dragg'd the scatter'd limbs into their  
den.

The Pope would have you make them  
render these;

So would your cousin, Cardinal Pole; ill  
counsel!

These let them keep at present; stir not  
yet

This matter of the Church lands. At  
his coming

Your star will rise.

*Mary.* My star! a baleful one.

I see but the black night, and hear the  
wolf.

What star?

*Renard.* Your star will be your  
princely son,

Heir of this England and the Netherlands!  
And if your wolf the while should howl  
for more,

We'll dust him from a bag of Spanish gold.  
I do believe, I have dusted some already,  
That, soon or late, your Parliament is ours.

*Mary.* Why do they talk so foully of  
your Prince,

Renard?

*Renard.* The lot of Princes. To sit  
high

Is to be lied about.

*Mary.* They call him cold,  
Haughty, ay, worse.

*Renard.* Why, doubtless, Philip shows  
Some of the bearing of your blue blood —

still

All within measure — nay, it well becomes  
him.

*Mary.* Hath he the large ability of  
his father?

*Renard.* Nay, some believe that he  
will go beyond him.

*Mary.* Is this like him?

*Renard.* Ay, somewhat; but your  
Philip

Is the most princelike Prince beneath the  
sun.

This is a daub to Philip.

*Mary.* Of a pure life?

*Renard.* As an angel among angels.  
Yea, by Heaven,

The text — Your Highness knows it,  
'Whosoever

Looketh after a woman,' would not graze  
The Prince of Spain. You are happy in

him there,

Chaste as your Grace!

*Mary.* I am happy in him there.

*Renard.* And would be altogether  
happy, Madam,

So that your sister were but look'd to  
closer.

You have sent her from the court, but  
then she goes,

I warrant, not to hear the nightingales,  
But hatch you some new treason in the  
woods.

*Mary.* We have our spies abroad to  
catch her tripping,

And then if caught, to the Tower.

*Renard.* The Tower! the block!  
The word has turn'd your Highness pale;

the thing

Was no such scarecrow in your father's  
time.

I have heard, the tongue yet quiver'd  
w'ith the jest  
When the head leapt—so common! I  
do think

To save your crown that it must come to  
this.

*Mary.* No, Renard; it must never  
come to this.

*Renard.* Not yet; but your old Traitors  
of the Tower—

Why, when you put Northumberland to  
death,

The sentence having past upon them  
all,

Spared you the Duke of Suffolk, Guildford  
Dudley,

Ev'n that young girl who dared to wear  
your crown?

*Mary.* Dared? nay, not so; the child  
obey'd her father.

Spite of her tears her father forced it on  
her.

*Renard.* Good Madam, when the  
Roman wish'd to reign,

He slew not him alone who wore the  
purple,

But his assessor in the throne, perchance  
A child more innocent than Lady Jane.

*Mary.* I am English Queen, not  
Roman Emperor.

*Renard.* Yet too much mercy is a  
want of mercy,

And wastes more life. Stamp out the  
fire, or this

Will smoulder and re-flame, and burn the  
throne

Where you should sit with Philip: he  
will not come

Till she be gone.

*Mary.* Indeed, if that were true—  
For Philip comes, one hand in mine,

and one

Steadying the tremulous pillars of the  
Church—

But no, no, no. Farewell. I am some-  
what faint

With our long talk. Tho' Queen, I am  
not Queen

Of mine own heart, which every now  
and then

Beats me half dead: yet stay, this golden  
chain—

My father on a birthday gave it me,

And I have broken with my father—take  
And wear it as memorial of a morning  
Which found me full of foolish doubts,  
and leaves me

As hopeful.

*Renard (aside).* Whew—the folly of  
all follies

Is to be love-sick for a shadow. (*Aloud.*)  
Madam,

This chains me to your service, not with  
gold,

But dearest links of love. Farewell, and  
trust me,

Philip is yours. [*Exit.*]

*Mary.* Mine—but not yet all mine.

*Enter USHER.*

*Usher.* Your Council is in Session,  
please your Majesty.

*Mary.* Sir, let them sit. I must have  
time to breathe.

No, say I come. (*Exit Usher.*) I won  
by boldness once.

The Emperor counsell'd me to fly to  
Flanders.

I would not; but a hundred miles I rode,  
Sent out my letters, call'd my friends

together,  
Struck home and won.

And when the Council would not crown  
me—thought

To bind me first by oaths I could not  
keep,

And keep with Christ and conscience—  
was it boldness

Or weakness that won there? when I,  
their Queen,

Cast myself down upon my knees before  
them,

And those hard men brake into woman-  
tears,

Ev'n Gardiner, all amazed, and in that  
passion

Gave me my Crown.

*Enter ALICE.*

Girl; hast thou ever heard  
Slanders against Prince Philip in our  
Court?

*Alice.* What slanders? I, your Grace;  
no, never.

*Mary.* Nothing?

*Alice.* Never, your Grace.

*Mary.* See that you neither hear them nor repeat!

*Alice (aside).* Good Lord! but I have heard a thousand such. Ay, and repeated them as often — mum! Why comes that old fox-Fleming back again?

*Enter RENARD.*

*Renard.* Madam, I scarce had left your Grace's presence Before I chanced upon the messenger Who brings that letter which we waited for —

The formal offer of Prince Philip's hand. It craves an instant answer, Ay or No.

*Mary.* An instant Ay or No! the Council sits. Give it me quick.

*Alice (stepping before her).* Your Highness is all trembling.

*Mary.* Make way.

[*Exit into the Council Chamber.*]

*Alice.* O Master Renard, Master Renard, If you have falsely painted your fine Prince;

Praised, where you should have blamed him, I pray God

No woman ever love you, Master Renard. It breaks my heart to hear her moan at night

As tho' the nightmare never left her bed.

*Renard.* My pretty maiden, tell me, did you ever Sigh for a beard?

*Alice.* That's not a pretty question.

*Renard.* Not prettily put? I mean, my pretty maiden,

A pretty man for such a pretty maiden.

*Alice.* My Lord of Devon is a pretty man.

I hate him. Well, but if I have, what then?

*Renard.* Then, pretty maiden, you should know that whether

A wind be warm or cold, it serves to fan A kindled fire.

*Alice.* According to the song.

His friends would praise him, I believed 'em,  
His foes would blame him, and I scorn'd 'em,  
His friends — as Angels I received 'em,  
His foes — the Devil had suborn'd 'em.

*Renard.* Peace, pretty maiden. I hear them stirring in the Council Chamber.

Lord Paget's 'Ay' is sure — who else? and yet,

They are all too much at odds to close at once

In one full-throated No! Her Highness comes.

*Enter MARY.*

*Alice.* How deathly pale! — a chair, your Highness.

[*Bringing one to the Queen.*]

*Renard.* Madam, The Council?

*Mary.* Ay! My Philip is all mine. [*Sinks into chair, half fainting.*]

## ACT II.

### SCENE I. — ALINGTON CASTLE.

*Sir Thomas Wyatt.* I do not hear from Carew or the Duke Of Suffolk, and till then I should not move.

The Duke hath gone to Leicester; Carew stirs

In Devon: that fine porcelain Courtenay, Save that he fears he might be crack'd in using

(I have known a semi-madman in my time

So fancy-ridd'n), should be in Devon too.

*Enter WILLIAM.*

News abroad, William?

*William.* None so new, Sir Thomas, and none so old, Sir Thomas. No new news that Philip comes to wed Mary, no old news that all men hate it. Old Sir Thomas would have hated it. The bells are ringing at Maidstone. Doesn't your worship hear?

*Wyatt.* Ay, for the Saints are come to reign again.

Most like it is a Saint's-day. There's no call

As yet for me; so in this pause, before The mine be fired, it were a pious work To string my father's sonnets, left about Like loosely-scatter'd jewels, in fair order,



And head them with a latter rhyme of mine,  
To grace his memory.

*William.* Ay, why not, Sir Thomas? He was a fine courtier, he; Queen Anne loved him. All the women loved him. I loved him, I was in Spain with him. I couldn't eat in Spain, I couldn't sleep in Spain. I hate Spain, Sir Thomas.

*Wyatt.* But thou could'st drink in Spain if I remember.

*William.* Sir Thomas, we may grant the wine. Old Sir Thomas always granted the wine.

*Wyatt.* Hand me the casket with my father's sonnets.

*William.* Ay—sonnets—a fine courtier of the old Court, old Sir Thomas.

[*Exit.*

*Wyatt.* Courtier of many courts, he loved the more

His own gray towers, plain life and letter'd peace,

To read and rhyme in solitary fields,  
The lark above, the nightingale below,  
And answer them in song. The sire begets

Not half his likeness in the son. I fail  
Where he was fullest: yet—to write it down. [*He writes.*

*Re-enter WILLIAM.*

*William.* There *is* news, there *is* news, and no call for sonnet-sorting now, nor for sonnet-making either, but ten thousand men on Penenden Heath all calling after your worship, and your worship's name heard into Maidstone market, and your worship the first man in Kent and Christendom, for the Queen's down, and the world's up, and your worship a-top of it.

*Wyatt.* Inverted Æsop—mountain out of mouse.

Say for ten thousand ten—and pothouse knaves,

Brain-dizzied with a draught of morning ale.

*Enter ANTHONY KNYVETT.*

*William.* Here's Anthony Knyvett.

*Knyvett.* Look you, Master Wyatt, Tear up that woman's work there.

*Wyatt.* No; not these,  
Dumb children of my father, that will speak

When I and thou and all rebellions lie  
Dead bodies without voice. Song flies  
you know

For ages.

*Knyvett.* Tut, your sonnet's a flying  
ant,

Wing'd for a moment.

*Wyatt.* Well, for mine own work,  
[*Tearing the paper.*

It lies there in six pieces at your feet;

For all that I can carry it in my head.

*Knyvett.* If you can carry your head  
upon your shoulders.

*Wyatt.* I fear you come to carry it off  
my shoulders,

And sonnet-making's safer.

*Knyvett.* Why, good Lord,  
Write you as many sonnets as you will.

Ay, but not now; what, have you eyes,  
ears, brains?

This Philip and the black-faced swarms  
of Spain,

The hardest, cruellest people in the world,  
Come locusting upon us, eat us up,

Confiscate lands, goods, money—Wyatt,  
Wyatt,

Wake, or the stout old island will become  
A rotten limb of Spain. They roar for  
you

On Penenden Heath, a thousand of them  
— more —

All arm'd, waiting a leader; there's no  
glory

Like his who saves his country: and you  
sit

Sing-songing here; but if I'm any judge,  
By God, you are as poor a poet, Wyatt,

As a good soldier.

*Wyatt.* You as poor a critic  
As an honest friend: you stroke me on  
one cheek,

Buffet the other. Come, you bluster,  
Anthony!

You know I know all this. I must not  
move

Until I hear from Carew and the Duke.

I fear the mine is fired before the time.

*Knyvett (showing a paper).* But here's  
some Hebrew. Faith, I half for-  
got it.

Look; can you make it English? A  
strange youth

Suddenly thrust it on me, whisper'd,  
'Wyatt,'

And whisking round a corner, show'd his  
back

Before I read his face.

*Wyatt.* Ha! Courtenay's cipher.

[*Reads.*

'Sir Peter Carew fled to France: it is  
thought the Duke will be taken. I am  
with you still; but, for appearance' sake,  
stay with the Queen. Gardiner knows,  
but the Council are all at odds, and the  
Queen hath no force for resistance.  
Move, if you move, at once.'

Is Peter Carew fled? Is the Duke taken?  
Down scabbard, and out sword! and let  
Rebellion

Roar till throne rock, and crown fall.

No; not that;

But we will teach Queen Mary how to  
reign.

Who are those that shout below there?

*Knyvett.* Why, some fifty

That follow'd me from Penenden Heath  
in hope

To hear you speak.

*Wyatt.* Open the window, Knyvett;  
The mine is fired, and I will speak to  
them.

Men of Kent; England of England;  
you that have kept your old customs  
upright, while all the rest of England  
bow'd theirs to the Norman, the cause  
that hath brought us together is not the  
cause of a county or a shire, but of this  
England, in whose crown our Kent is the  
fairest jewel. Philip shall not wed Mary;  
and ye have called me to be your leader.  
I know Spain. I have been there with  
my father; I have seen them in their own  
land; have marked the haughtiness of  
their nobles; the cruelty of their priests.  
If this man marry our Queen, however  
the Council and the Commons may fence  
round his power with restriction, he will  
be King, King of England, my masters;  
and the Queen, and the laws, and the  
people, his slaves. What? shall we have  
Spain on the throne and in the parlia-

ment; Spain in the pulpit and on the  
law-bench; Spain in all the great offices  
of state; Spain in our ships, in our forts,  
in our houses, in our beds?

*Crowd.* No! no! no Spain!

*William.* No Spain in our beds—  
that were worse than all. I have been  
there with old Sir Thomas, and the beds  
I know. I hate Spain.

*A Peasant.* But, Sir Thomas, must we  
levy war against the Queen's Grace?

*Wyatt.* No, my friend; war for the  
Queen's Grace—to save her from herself  
and Philip—war against Spain. And  
think not we shall be alone—thousands  
will flock to us. The Council, the Court  
itself, is on our side. The Lord Chancel-  
lor himself is on our side. The King of  
France is with us; the King of Denmark  
is with us; the world is with us—war  
against Spain! And if we move not now,  
yet it will be known that we have moved;  
and if Philip come to be King, O my  
God! the rope, the rack, the thumbscrew,  
the stake, the fire. If we move not now,  
Spain moves, bribes our nobles with her  
gold, and creeps, creeps snake-like about  
our legs till we cannot move at all; and  
ye know, my masters, that wherever  
Spain hath ruled she hath wither'd all  
beneath her. Look at the New World—  
a paradise made hell; the red man, that  
good helpless creature, starved, maim'd,  
flogg'd, flay'd, burn'd, boil'd, buried alive,  
worried by dogs; and here, nearer home,  
the Netherlands, Sicily, Naples, Lom-  
bardy. I say no more—only this, their  
lot is yours. Forward to London with  
me! forward to London! If ye love  
your liberties or your skins, forward to  
London!

*Crowd.* Forward to London! A  
Wyatt! a Wyatt!

*Wyatt.* But first to Rochester, to take  
the guns

From out the vessels lying in the river.

Then on.

*A Peasant.* Ay, but I fear we be too  
few, Sir Thomas.

*Wyatt.* Not many yet. The world as  
yet, my friend,

Is not half-waked; but every parish tower  
Shall clang and clash alarum as we pass,

And pour along the land, and swoll'n and fed

With indraughts and side-currents, in full force

Roll upon London.

*Crowd.* A Wyatt! a Wyatt! Forward!

*Knyvett.* Wyatt, shall we proclaim Elizabeth?

*Wyatt.* I'll think upon it, Knyvett.

*Knyvett.* Or Lady Jane?

*Wyatt.* No, poor soul; no.

Ah, gray old castle of Alington, green field Beside the brimming Medway, it may chance

That I shall never look upon you more.

*Knyvett.* Come, now, you're sonnetting again.

*Wyatt.* Not I.

I'll have my head set higher in the state; Or—if the Lord God will it—on the stake. [*Exeunt.*]

SCENE II. — GUILDHALL.

SIR THOMAS WHITE (the Lord Mayor),  
LORD WILLIAM HOWARD, SIR RALPH  
BAGENHALL, ALDERMEN and CITIZENS.

*White.* I trust the Queen comes hither with her guards.

*Howard.* Ay, all in arms.

[*Several of the citizens move hastily out of the hall.*]

Why do they hurry out there?

*White.* My Lord, cut out the rotten from your apple,

Your apple eats the better. Let them go.

They go like those old Pharisees in John Convicted by their conscience, arrant cowards,

Or tamperers with that treason out of Kent.

When will her Grace be here?

*Howard.* In some few minutes. She will address your guilds and companies.

I have striven in vain to raise a man for her.

But help her in this exigency, make Your city loyal, and be the mightiest man This day in England.

*White.* I am Thomas White. Few things have fail'd to which I set my will.

I do my most and best.

*Howard.* You know that after The Captain Brett, who went with your train bands

To fight with Wyatt, had gone over to him With all his men, the Queen in that distress

Sent Cornwallis and Hastings to the traitor,

Feigning to treat with him about her marriage—

Know too what Wyatt said.

*White.* He'd sooner be, While this same marriage question was being argued,

Trusted than trust—the scoundrel—and demanded

Possession of her person and the Tower.

*Howard.* And four of her poor Council too, my Lord,

As hostages.

*White.* I know it. What do and say Your Council at this hour?

*Howard.* I will trust you. We fling ourselves on you, my Lord.

The Council, The Parliament as well, are troubled waters;

And yet like waters of the fen they know not

Which way to flow. All hangs on her address,

And upon you, Lord Mayor.

*White.* How look'd the city When now you past it? Quiet?

*Howard.* Like our Council, Your city is divided. As we past, Some hail'd, some hiss'd us. There were citizens

Stood each before his shut-up booth, and look'd

As grim and grave as from a funeral.

And here a knot of ruffians all in rags, With execrating execrable eyes,

Glared at the citizen. Here was a young mother,

Her face on flame, her red hair all blown back,

She shrilling 'Wyatt,' while the boy she held

Mimick'd and piped her 'Wyatt,' as red  
 as she  
 In hair and cheek; and almost elbowing  
 her,  
 So close they stood, another, mute as  
 death,  
 And white as her own milk; her babe in  
 arms  
 Had felt the faltering of his mother's  
 heart,  
 And look'd as bloodless. Here a pious  
 Catholic,  
 Mumbling and mixing up in his scared  
 prayers  
 Heaven and earth's Mariés; over his  
 bow'd shoulder  
 Scowl'd that world-hated and world-  
 hating beast,  
 A haggard Anabaptist. Many such  
 groups.  
 The names of Wyatt, Elizabeth, Cour-  
 tenay,  
 Nay, the Queen's right to reign — 'fore  
 God, the rogues —  
 Were freely buzz'd among them. So I  
 say  
 Your city is divided, and I fear  
 One scruple, this or that way, of success  
 Would turn it thither. Wherefore now  
 the Queen  
 In this low pulse and palsy of the state,  
 Bade me to tell you that she counts on  
 you  
 And on myself as her two hands; on you,  
 In your own city, as her right, my Lord,  
 For you are loyal.

*White.* Am I Thomas White?  
 One word before she comes. Elizabeth —  
 Her name is much abused among these  
 traitors.  
 Where is she? She is loved by all of us.  
 I scarce have heart to mingle in this  
 matter,  
 If she should be mishandled.

*Howard.* No; she shall not.  
 The Queen had written her word to  
 come to court:  
 Methought I smelt out Renard in the  
 letter,  
 And fearing for her, sent a secret missive,  
 Which told her to be sick. Happily or  
 not,  
 It found her sick indeed.

*White.* God send her well;  
 Here comes her Royal Grace.

*Enter GUARDS, MARY, and GARDINER.*  
*SIR THOMAS WHITE leads her to a  
 raised seat on the dais.*

*White.* I, the Lord Mayor, and these  
 our companies  
 And guilds of London, gathered here,  
 beseech  
 Your Highness to accept our lowliest  
 thanks  
 For your most princely presence; and we  
 pray  
 That we, your true and loyal citizens,  
 From your own royal lips, at once may  
 know  
 The wherefore of this coming, and so  
 learn  
 Your royal will, and do it. — I, Lord  
 Mayor  
 Of London, and our guilds and com-  
 panies.

*Mary.* In mine own person am I  
 come to you,  
 To tell you what indeed ye see and know,  
 How traitorously these rebels out of Kent  
 Have made strong head against ourselves  
 and you.  
 They would not have me wed the Prince  
 of Spain;  
 That was their pretext — so they spake  
 at first —  
 But we sent divers of our Council to them,  
 And by their answers to the question  
 ask'd,

It doth appear this marriage is the least  
 Of all their quarrel.  
 They have betray'd the treason of their  
 hearts:  
 Seek to possess our person, hold our  
 Tower,  
 Place and displace our councillors, and  
 use  
 Both us and them according as they will.  
 Now what I am ye know right well —  
 your Queen;  
 To whom, when I was wedded to the  
 realm  
 And the realm's laws (the spousal ring  
 whereof,  
 Not ever to be laid aside, I wear  
 Upon this finger), ye did promise full

Allegiance and obedience to the death.  
Ye know my father was the rightful heir  
Of England, and his right came down to  
me,

Corroborate by your acts of Parliament:  
And as ye were most loving unto him,  
So doubtless will ye show yourselves to  
me.

Wherefore, ye will not brook that any-  
one

Should seize our person, occupy our  
state,

More specially a traitor so presumptuous  
As this same Wyatt, who hath tamper'd  
with

A public ignorance, and, under colour  
Of such a cause as hath no colour, seeks  
To bend the laws to his own will, and  
yield

Full scope to persons rascal and forlorn,  
To make free spoil and havock of your  
goods.

Now as your Prince, I say,  
I, that was never mother, cannot tell  
How mothers love their children; yet,  
methinks,

A prince as naturally may love his people  
As these their children; and be sure your  
Queen

So loves you, and so loving, needs must  
deem

This love by you return'd as heartily;  
And thro' this common knot and bond of  
love,

Doubt not they will be speedily over-  
thrown.

As to this marriage, ye shall understand  
We made thereto no treaty of ourselves,  
And set no foot theretoward unadvised  
Of all our Privy Council; furthermore,  
This marriage had the assent of those to  
whom

The king, my father, did commit his trust;  
Who not alone esteem'd it honourable,  
But for the wealth and glory of our realm,  
And all our loving subjects, most ex-  
pedient.

As to myself,  
I am not so set on wedlock as to choose  
But where I list, nor yet so amorous  
That I must needs be husbanded; I thank  
God,

I have lived a virgin, and I noway doubt

But that with God's grace I can live so  
still.

Yet if it might please God that I should  
leave

Some fruit of mine own body after me,  
To be your king, ye would rejoice thereat,  
And it would be your comfort, as I trust;  
And truly, if I either thought or knew  
This marriage should bring loss or danger  
to you,

My subjects, or impair in any way  
This royal state of England, I would never  
Consent thereto, nor marry while I live;  
Moreover, if this marriage should not  
seem,

Before our own High Court of Parliament,  
To be of rich advantage to our realm,  
We will refrain, and not alone from this,  
Likewise from any other, out of which  
Looms the least chance of peril to our  
realm.

Wherefore be bold, and with your lawful  
Prince

Stand fast against our enemies and yours,  
And fear them not. I fear them not.  
My Lord,

I leave Lord William Howard in your  
city,

To guard and keep you whole and safe  
from all

The spoil and sackage aim'd at by these  
rebels,

Who mouth and foam against the Prince  
of Spain.

*Voices.* Long live Queen Mary!  
Down with Wyatt!

The Queen!

*White.* Three voices from our guilds  
and companies!

You are shy and proud like Englishmen,  
my masters,

And will not trust your voices. Under-  
stand:

Your lawful Prince hath come to cast  
herself

On loyal hearts and bosoms, hoped to fall  
Into the widespread arms of fealty,

And finds you statues. Speak at once —  
and all!

For whom?  
Our sovereign Lady by King Harry's will;  
The Queen of England — or the Kentish  
Squire?

I know you loyal. Speak! in the name  
of God!

The Queen of England or the rabble of  
Kent?

The reeking dungfork master of the mace!  
Your havings wasted by the scythe and  
spade —

Your rights and charters hobnail'd into  
slush —

Your houses fired — your gutters bubbling  
blood —

*Acclamation.* No! No! The Queen!  
the Queen!

*White.* Your Highness hears  
This burst and bass of loyal harmony,  
And how we each and all of us abhor  
The venomous, bestial, devilish revolt  
Of Thomas Wyatt. Hear us now make  
oath

To raise your Highness thirty thousand  
men,

And arm and strike as with one hand,  
and brush

This Wyatt from our shoulders, like a flea  
That might have leapt upon us unawares.  
Swear with me, noble fellow-citizens, all,  
With all your trades, and guilds, and  
companies.

*Citizens.* We swear!

*Mary.* We thank your Lordship and  
your loyal city.

[*Exit Mary attended.*]

*White.* I trust this day, thro' God, I  
have saved the crown.

*First Alderman.* Ay, so my Lord of  
Pembroke in command  
Of all her force be safe; but there are  
doubts.

*Second Alderman.* I hear that Gar-  
diner, coming with the Queen,  
And meeting Pembroke, bent to his  
saddle-bow,

As if to win the man by flattering him.  
*Is he so safe to fight upon her side?*

*First Alderman.* If not, there's no  
man safe.

*White.* Yes, Thomas White.  
I am safe enough; no man need flatter me.

*Second Alderman.* Nay, no man need;  
but did you mark our Queen?  
The colour freely play'd into her face,  
And the half sight which makes her look  
so stern,

Seem'd thro' that dim dilated world of  
hers,

To read our faces; I have never seen her  
So queenly or so goodly.

*White.* Courage, sir,  
That makes or man or woman look their  
goodliest.

Die like the torn fox dumb, but never  
whine

Like that poor heart, Northumberland,  
at the block.

*Bagenhall.* The man had children,  
and he whined for those.

Methinks most men are but poor-hearted,  
else

Should we so dote on courage, were it  
commoner?

The Queen stands up, and speaks for her  
own self;

And all men cry, She is queenly, she is  
goodly.

Yet she's no goodlier; tho' my Lord  
Mayor here,

By his own rule, he hath been so bold  
to-day,

Should look more goodly than the rest of  
us.

*White.* Goodly? I feel most goodly  
heart and hand,

And strong to throw ten Wyatts and all  
Kent.

Ha! ha! sir; but you jest; I love it: a  
jest

In time of danger shows the pulses even.  
Be merry! yet, Sir Ralph, you look but  
sad.

I dare avouch you'd stand up for your-  
self,

Tho' all the world should bay like winter  
wolves.

*Bagenhall.* Who knows? the man is  
proven by the hour.

*White.* The man should make the  
hour, not this the man;

And Thomas White will prove this  
Thomas Wyatt,

And he will prove an Iden to this Cade,  
And he will play the Walworth to this  
Wat;

Come, sirs, we prate; hence all — gather  
your men —

Myself must bustle. Wyatt comes to  
Southwark;



I'll have the drawbridge hewn into the Thames,  
And see the citizens arm'd. Good-day;  
good-day. [Exit White.

*Bagenhall.* One of much outdoor bluster.

*Howard.* For all that,  
Most honest, brave, and skilful; and his wealth

A fountain of perennial alms — his fault  
So thoroughly to believe in his own self.

*Bagenhall.* Yet thoroughly to believe  
in one's own self,

So one's own self be thorough, were to do  
Great things, my Lord.

*Howard.* It may be.

*Bagenhall.* I have heard  
One of your Council flee and jeer at him.

*Howard.* The nursery-cocker'd child  
will jeer at aught

That may seem strange beyond his nursery.  
The statesman that shall jeer and flee at  
men,

Makes enemies for himself and for his  
king;

And if he jeer not seeing the true man  
Behind his folly, he is thrice the fool;  
And if he see the man and still will jeer,  
He is child and fool, and traitor to the  
State.

Who is he? let me shun him.

*Bagenhall.* Nay, my Lord,  
He is damn'd enough already.

*Howard.* I must set  
The guard at Ludgate. Fare you well,  
Sir Ralph.

*Bagenhall.* 'Who knows?' I am for  
England. But who knows,  
That knows the Queen, the Spaniard, and  
the Pope,  
Whether I be for Wyatt, or the Queen?

[Exeunt.

SCENE III. — LONDON BRIDGE.

Enter SIR THOMAS WYATT and BRETT.

*Wyatt.* Brett, when the Duke of  
Norfolk moved against us  
Thou cried'st 'A Wyatt!' and flying to  
our side

Left his all bare, for which I love thee,  
Brett.

Have for thine asking aught that I can  
give,

For thro' thine help we are come to  
London Bridge;

But how to cross it balks me. I fear we  
cannot.

*Brett.* Nay, hardly, save by boat,  
swimming, or wings.

*Wyatt.* Last night I climb'd into the  
gate-house, Brett,

And scared the gray old porter and his wife.  
And then I crept along the gloom and saw

They had hewn the drawbridge down into  
the river.

It roll'd as black as death; and that same  
tide

Which, coming with our coming, seem'd  
to smile

And sparkle like our fortune as thou  
saidest,

Ran sunless down, and moan'd against  
the piers.

But o'er the chasm I saw Lord William  
Howard

By torchlight, and his guard; four guns  
gaped at me,

Black, silent mouths: had Howard spied  
me there

And made them speak, as well he might  
have done,

Their voice had left me none to tell you  
this.

What shall we do?

*Brett.* On somehow. To go back  
Were to lose all.

*Wyatt.* On over London Bridge  
We cannot; stay we cannot; there is  
ordnance

On the White Tower and on the Devil's  
Tower,

And pointed full at Southwark; we must  
round

By Kingston Bridge.

*Brett.* Ten miles about.

*Wyatt.* Ev'n so.

But I have notice from our partisans  
Within the city that they will stand by us  
If Ludgate can be reach'd by dawn to-  
morrow.

Enter one of WYATT'S men.

*Man.* Sir Thomas, I've found this  
paper; pray your worship read it; I

know not my letters; the old priests taught me nothing.

*Wyatt (reads).* 'Whosoever will apprehend the traitor Thomas Wyatt shall have a hundred pounds for reward.'

*Man.* Is that it? That's a big lot of money.

*Wyatt.* Ay, ay, my friend; not read it? 'tis not written

Half plain enough. Give me a piece of paper!

[*Writes 'THOMAS WYATT' large.*

There, any man can read that.

[*Sticks it in his cap.*

*Brett.* But that's foolhardy.

*Wyatt.* No! boldness, which will give my followers boldness.

*Enter MAN with a prisoner.*

*Man.* We found him, your worship, plundering o' Bishop Winchester's house; he says he's a poor gentleman.

*Wyatt.* Gentleman! a thief! Go hang him. Shall we make Those that we come to serve our sharpest foes?

*Brett.* Sir Thomas—

*Wyatt.* Hang him, I say.

*Brett.* Wyatt, but now you promised me a boon.

*Wyatt.* Ay, and I warrant this fine fellow's life.

*Brett.* Ev'n so; he was my neighbour once in Kent.

He's poor enough, has drunk and gambled out

All that he had, and gentleman he was. We have been glad together; let him live.

*Wyatt.* He has gambled for his life, and lost, he hangs.

No, no, my word's my word. Take thy poor gentleman!

Gamble thyself at once out of my sight, Or I will dig thee with my dagger. Away! Women and children!

*Enter a Crowd of WOMEN and Children.*

*First Woman.* O Sir Thomas, Sir Thomas, pray you go away, Sir Thomas, or you'll make the White Tower a black 'un for us this blessed day. He'll be the death on us; and you'll set the Devil's

Tower a-spitting, and he'll smash all our bits o' things worse than Philip o' Spain.

*Second Woman.* Don't ye now go to think that we be for Philip o' Spain.

*Third Woman.* No, we know that ye be come to kill the Queen, and we'll pray for you all on our bended knees. But o' God's mercy don't ye kill the Queen here, Sir Thomas; look ye, here's little Dickon, and little Robin, and little Jenny—though she's but a side-cousin—and all on our knees, we pray you to kill the Queen further off, Sir Thomas.

*Wyatt.* My friends, I have not come to kill the Queen

Or here or there: I come to save you all, And I'll go further off.

*Crowd.* Thanks, Sir Thomas, we be beholden to you, and we'll pray for you on our bended knees till our lives' end.

*Wyatt.* Be happy, I am your friend. To Kingston, forward! [*Exeunt.*

SCENE IV.—ROOM IN THE GATEHOUSE OF WESTMINSTER PALACE.

MARY, ALICE, GARDINER, RENARD, LADIES.

*Gardiner.* Their cry is, Philip never shall be king.

*Mary.* Lord Pembroke in command of all our force

Will front their cry and shatter them into dust.

*Alice.* Was not Lord Pembroke with Northumberland?

O Madam, if this Pembroke should be false?

*Mary.* No, girl; most brave and loyal, brave and loyal.

His breaking with Northumberland broke Northumberland.

At the park gate he hovers with our guards.

These Kentish ploughmen cannot break the guards.

*Enter MESSENGER.*

*Messenger.* Wyatt, your Grace, hath broken thro' the guards And gone to Ludgate.

*Gardiner.* Madam, I much fear

That all is lost; but we can save your Grace.

The river still is free. I do beseech you,

There yet is time, take boat and pass to Windsor.

*Mary.* I pass to Windsor and I lose my crown.

*Gardiner.* Pass, then, I pray your Highness, to the Tower.

*Mary.* I shall but be their prisoner in the Tower.

*Cries without.* The traitor! treason! Pembroke!

*Ladies.* Treason! treason!

*Mary.* Peace.

False to Northumberland, is he false to me?

Bear witness, Renard, that I live and die

The true and faithful bride of Philip — A sound

Of feet and voices thickening hither — blows —

Hark, there is battle at the palace gates,

And I will out upon the gallery.

*Ladies.* No, no, your Grace; see there the arrows flying.

*Mary.* I am Harry's daughter, Tudor, and not Fear.

[*Goes out on the gallery.*]

The guards are all driven in, skulk into corners

Like rabbits to their holes. A gracious guard

Truly; shame on them! they have shut the gates!

*Enter SIR ROBERT SOUTHWELL.*

*Southwell.* The porter, please your Grace, hath shut the gates

On friend and foe. Your gentlemen-at-arms,

If this be not your Grace's order, cry To have the gates set wide again, and they

With their good battleaxes will do you right

Against all traitors.

*Mary.* They are the flower of England; set the gates wide.

[*Exit Southwell.*]

*Enter COURTENAY.*

*Courtenay.* All lost, all lost, all yielded! A barge, a barge! The Queen must to the Tower.

*Mary.* Whence come you, sir?

*Courtenay.* From Charing Cross; the rebels broke us there, And I sped hither with what haste I might

To save my royal cousin.

*Mary.* Where is Pembroke?

*Courtenay.* I left him somewhere in the thick of it.

*Mary.* Left him and fled; and thou that would'st be King,

And hast nor heart nor honour. I myself Will down into the battle and there bide The upshot of my quarrel, or die with those That are no cowards and no Courtenays.

*Courtenay.* I do not love your Grace should call me coward.

*Enter another MESSENGER.*

*Messenger.* Over, your Grace, all crush'd; the brave Lord William Thrust him from Ludgate, and the traitor flying

To Temple Bar, there by Sir Maurice Berkeley

Was taken prisoner.

*Mary.* To the Tower with him!

*Messenger.* 'Tis said he told Sir Maurice there was one Cognisant of this, and party thereunto, My Lord of Devon.

*Mary.* To the Tower with him!

*Courtenay.* O la, the Tower, the Tower, always the Tower, I shall grow into it — I shall be the Tower.

*Mary.* Your Lordship may not have so long to wait.

Remove him!

*Courtenay.* La, to whistle out my life, And carve my coat upon the walls again!

[*Exit Courtenay guarded.*]

*Messenger.* Also this Wyatt did confess the Princess

Cognisant thereof, and party thereunto.

*Mary.* What? whom — whom did you say?

*Messenger.* Elizabeth, Your Royal sister.

*Mary.* To the Tower with her!  
My foes are at my feet and I am Queen.

[*Gardiner and her Ladies kneel to her.*  
*Gardiner (rising).* There let them lie,  
your footstool! (*Aside.*) Can I  
strike

Elizabeth? — not now and save the life  
Of Devon: if I save him, he and his  
Are bound to me — may strike hereafter.

(*Aloud.*) Madam,  
What Wyatt said, or what they said he  
said,

Cries of the moment and the street —  
*Mary.* He said it.

*Gardiner.* Your courts of justice will  
determine that.

*Renard (advancing).* I trust by this  
your Highness will allow  
Some spice of wisdom in my telling you,  
When last we talk'd, that Philip would  
not come

Till Guildford Dudley and the Duke of  
Suffolk,  
And Lady Jane had left us.

*Mary.* They shall die.

*Renard.* And your so loving sister?

*Mary.* She shall die.

My foes are at my feet, and Philip King.  
[*Exeunt.*

### ACT III.

SCENE I.—THE CONDUIT IN GRACE-  
CHURCH,

*Painted with the Nine Worthies, among  
them King Henry VIII. holding a book,  
on it inscribed 'Verbum Dei.'*

*Enter SIR RALPH BAGENHALL and SIR  
THOMAS STAFFORD.*

*Bagenhall.* A hundred here and hun-  
dreds hang'd in Kent.

The tigress had unsheathed her nails at  
last,

And Renard and the Chancellor sharpen'd  
them.

In every London street a gibbet stood.  
They are down to-day. Here by this  
house was one;

The traitor husband dangled at the door,  
And when the traitor wife came out for  
bread

To still the petty treason therewithin,  
Her cap would brush his heels.

*Stafford.* It is Sir Ralph,  
And muttering to himself as heretofore.  
Sir, see you aught up yonder?

*Bagenhall.* I miss something.  
The tree that only bears dead fruit is  
gone.

*Stafford.* What tree, sir?

*Bagenhall.* Well, the  
tree in Virgil, sir,

That bears not its own apples.

*Stafford.* What! the gallows?

*Bagenhall.* Sir, this dead fruit was  
ripening overmuch,

And had to be removed lest living Spain,  
Should sicken at dead England.

*Stafford.* Not so dead,  
But that a shock may rouse her.

*Bagenhall.* I believe  
Sir Thomas Stafford?

*Stafford.* I am ill disguised.

*Bagenhall.* Well, are you not in peril  
here?

*Stafford.* I think so.

I came to feel the pulse of England,  
whether

It beats hard at this marriage. Did you  
see it?

*Bagenhall.* Stafford, I am a sad man  
and a serious.

Far liefer had I in my country hall  
Been reading some old book, with mine  
old hound

Couch'd at my hearth, and mine old flask  
of wine

Beside me, than have seen it: yet I saw it.  
*Stafford.* Good, was it splendid?

*Bagenhall.* Ay, if Dukes, and Earls,  
And Counts, and sixty Spanish cavaliers,  
Some six or seven Bishops, diamonds,  
pearls,

That royal commonplace too, cloth of  
gold,

Could make it so.

*Stafford.* And what was Mary's dress?

*Bagenhall.* Good faith, I was too sorry  
for the woman

To mark the dress. She wore red shoes!  
*Stafford.* Red shoes!

*Bagenhall.* Scarlet, as if her feet were  
wash'd in blood,

As if she had waded in it.

*Stafford.* Were your eyes  
So bashful that you look'd no higher?

*Bagenhall.* A diamond,  
And Philip's gift, as proof of Philip's love,  
Who hath not any for any, — tho' a true  
one,

Blazed false upon her heart.

*Stafford.* But this proud Prince —

*Bagenhall.* Nay, he is King, you  
know, the King of Naples.

The father ceded Naples, that the son  
Being a King, might wed a Queen — O he  
Flamed in brocade — white satin his  
trunk-hose,

Inwrought with silver, — on his neck a  
collar,

Gold, thick with diamonds; hanging  
down from this

The Golden Fleece — and round his knee,  
misplaced,

Our English Garter, studded with great  
emeralds,

Rubies, I know not what. Have you had  
enough

Of all this gear?

*Stafford.* Ay, since you hate the  
telling it.

How look'd the Queen?

*Bagenhall.* No fairer for her jewels.  
And I could see that as the new-made  
couple

Came from the Minster, moving side by  
side

Beneath one canopy, ever and anon  
She cast on him a vassal smile of love,  
Which Philip with a glance of some dis-  
taste,

Or so methought, return'd. I may be  
wrong, sir.

This marriage will not hold.

*Stafford.* I think with you.  
The King of France will help to break it.

*Bagenhall.* France!  
We once had half of France, and hurl'd  
our battles

Into the heart of Spain; but England  
now

Is but a ball chuck'd between France  
and Spain,

His in whose hand she drops; Harry of  
Bolingbroke

Had holpen Richard's tottering throne to  
stand,

Could Harry have foreseen that all our  
nobles

Would perish on the civil slaughter-field,  
And leave the people naked to the crown,  
And the crown naked to the people; the  
crown

Female, too! Sir, no woman's regimen  
Can save us. We are fallen, and as I  
think,

Never to rise again.

*Stafford.* You are too black-blooded.  
I'd make a move myself to hinder that:  
I know some lusty fellows there in  
France.

*Bagenhall.* You would but make us  
weaker, Thomas Stafford.

Wyatt was a good soldier, yet he fail'd,  
And strengthen'd Philip.

*Stafford.* Did not his last breath  
Clear Courtenay and the Princess from  
the charge

Of being his co-rebels?

*Bagenhall.* Ay, but then  
What such a one as Wyatt says is  
nothing:

We have no men among us. The new  
Lords

Are quieted with their sop of Abbeylands,  
And ev'n before the Queen's face Gardi-  
ner buys them

With Philip's gold. All greed, no faith,  
no courage!

Why, ev'n the haughty prince, Northum-  
berland,

The leader of our Reformation, knelt  
And blubber'd like a lad, and on the  
scaffold

Recanted, and resold himself to Rome.

*Stafford.* I swear you do your country  
wrong, Sir Ralph.

I know a set of exiles over there,  
Dare-devils, that would eat fire and spit  
it out

At Philip's beard: they pillage Spain  
already.

The French King winks at it. An hour  
will come

When they will sweep her from the seas.  
No men?

Did not Lord Suffolk die like a true man?  
Is not Lord William Howard a true man?

Yea, you yourself, altho' you are black-  
blooded:

And I, by God, believe myself a man.  
Ay, even in the church there is a man —  
Crammer.

Fly would he not, when all men bade him  
fly.

And what a letter he wrote against the  
Pope!

There's a brave man, if any.

*Bagenhall.* Ay; if it hold.

*Crowd (coming on).* God save their  
Graces!

*Stafford.* Bagenhall, I see  
The Tudor green and white. (*Trumpets.*)  
They are coming now.

And here's a crowd as thick as herring-  
shoals.

*Bagenhall.* Be limpets to this pillar,  
or we are torn

Down the strong wave of brawlers.

*Crowd.* God save their Graces!

[*Procession of Trumpeters, Javelin-  
men, etc.; then Spanish and  
Flemish Nobles intermingled.*]

*Stafford.* Worth seeing, Bagenhall!  
These black dog-Dons

Garb themselves bravely. Who's the  
long-face there,

Looks very Spain of very Spain?

*Bagenhall.* The Duke  
Of Alva, an iron soldier.

*Stafford.* And the Dutchman,  
Now laughing at some jest?

*Bagenhall.* William of Orange,  
William the Silent.

*Stafford.* Why do they call him so?

*Bagenhall.* He keeps, they say, some  
secret that may cost

Philip his life.

*Stafford.* But then he looks so merry.

*Bagenhall.* I cannot tell you why they  
call him so.

[*The King and Queen pass, attended  
by Peers of the Realm, Officers of  
State, etc. Cannon shot off.*]

*Crowd.* Philip and Mary, Philip and  
Mary!

Long live the King and Queen, Philip  
and Mary!

*Stafford.* They smile as if content with  
one another.

*Bagenhall.* A smile abroad is oft a  
scowl at home.

[*King and Queen pass on. Procession.*]

*First Citizen.* I thought this Philip  
had been one of those black devils of  
Spain, but he hath a yellow beard.

*Second Citizen.* Not red like Iscariot's.

*First Citizen.* Like a carrot's, as thou  
say'st, and English carrot's better than  
Spanish licorice; but I thought he was a  
beast.

*Third Citizen.* Certain I had heard  
that every Spaniard carries a tail like a  
devil under his trunk-hose.

*Taylor.* Ay, but see what trunk-hoses!  
Lord! they be fine; I never stitch'd  
none such. They make amends for the  
tails.

*Fourth Citizen.* Tut! every Spanish  
priest will tell you that all English heretics  
have tails.

*Fifth Citizen.* Death and the Devil —  
if he find I have one —

*Fourth Citizen.* Lo! thou hast call'd  
them up! here they come — a pale horse  
for Death and Gardiner for the Devil.

*Enter GARDINER (turning back from the  
procession).*

*Gardiner.* Knave, wilt thou wear thy  
cap before the Queen?

*Man.* My Lord, I stand so squeezed  
among the crowd

I cannot lift my hands unto my head.

*Gardiner.* Knock off his cap there,  
some of you about him!

See there be others that can use their  
hands.

Thou art one of Wyatt's men?

*Man.* No, my Lord, no.

*Gardiner.* Thy name, thou knave?

*Man.* I am nobody, my Lord.

*Gardiner (shouting).* God's passion!  
knave, thy name?

*Man.* I have ears to hear.

*Gardiner.* Ay, rascal, if I leave thee  
ears to hear.

Find out his name and bring it me (*to  
Attendant*).

*Attendant.* Ay, my Lord.

*Gardiner.* Knave, thou shalt lose  
thine ears and find thy tongue,  
And shalt be thankful if I leave thee that.

[*Coming before the Conduit.*  
The conduit painted — the nine worthies  
— ay!



But then what's here? King Harry with  
a scroll.

Ha — Verbum Dei — verbum — word of  
God!

God's passion! do you know the knave  
that painted it?

*Attendant.* I do, my Lord.

*Gardiner.* Tell him to paint it out,  
And put some fresh device in lieu of  
it —

A pair of gloves, a pair of gloves, sir;  
ha?

There is no heresy there.

*Attendant.* I will, my Lord;  
The man shall paint a pair of gloves. I  
am sure

(Knowing the man) he wrought it igno-  
rantly,

And not from any malice.

*Gardiner.* Word of God  
In English! over this the brainless loons  
That cannot spell Esayas from St. Paul,  
Make themselves drunk and mad, fly out  
and flare

Into rebellions. I'll have their Bibles  
burnt.

The Bible is the priest's. Ay! fellow,  
what!

Stand staring at me! shout, you gaping  
rogue!

*Man.* I have, my Lord, shouted till  
I am hoarse.

*Gardiner.* What hast thou shouted,  
knave?

*Man.* Long live Queen Mary!

*Gardiner.* Knave, there be two.

There be both King and Queen,

Philip and Mary. Shout!

*Man.* Nay, but, my Lord,  
The Queen comes first, Mary and Philip.

*Gardiner.* Shout, then,  
Mary and Philip!

*Man.* Mary and Philip!

*Gardiner.* Now,  
Thou hast shouted for thy pleasure, shout  
for mine!

Philip and Mary!

*Man.* Must it be so, my Lord?

*Gardiner.* Ay, knave.

*Man.* Philip and Mary!

*Gardiner.* I distrust thee.  
Thine is a half voice and a lean assent.  
What is thy name?

*Man.* Sanders.

*Gardiner.* What else?

*Man.* Zerubbabel.

*Gardiner.* Where dost thou live?

*Man.* In Cornhill.

*Gardiner.* Where, knave, where?

*Man.* Sign of the Talbot.

*Gardiner.* Come to me to-morrow. —  
Rascal! — this land is like a hill of fire,  
One crater opens when another shuts.

But so I get the laws against the heretic,  
Spite of Lord Paget and Lord William  
Howard,

And others of our Parliament, revived,  
I will show fire on my side — stake and  
fire —

Sharp work and short. The knaves are  
easily cow'd.

Follow their Majesties.

[*Exit. The crowd following.*]

*Bagenhall.* As proud as Becket.

*Stafford.* You would not have him  
murder'd as Becket was?

*Bagenhall.* No — murder fathers mur-  
der: but I say

There is no man — there was one woman  
with us —

It was a sin to love her married, dead  
I cannot choose but love her.

*Stafford.* Lady Jane?

*Crowd (going off).* God save their  
Graces!

*Stafford.* Did you see her die?

*Bagenhall.* No, no; her innocent  
blood had blinded me.

You call me too black-blooded — true  
enough

Her dark dead blood is in my heart with  
mine.

If ever I cry out against the Pope  
Her dark dead blood that ever moves  
with mine

Will stir the living tongue and make the  
cry.

*Stafford.* Yet doubtless you can tell  
me how she died?

*Bagenhall.* Seventeen — and knew  
eight languages — in music

Peerless — her needle perfect, and her  
learning

Beyond the churchmen; yet so meek, so  
modest,

So wife-like humble to the trivial boy

Mismatch'd with her for policy! I have heard

She would not take a last farewell of him,  
She fear'd it might unman him for his end.  
She could not be unmann'd—no, nor  
outwoman'd—

Seventeen—a rose of grace!  
Girl never breathed to rival such a rose;  
Rose never blew that equall'd such a bud.

*Stafford.* Pray you go on.

*Bagenhall.* She came upon the scaffold,  
And said she was condemn'd to die for treason;

She had but follow'd the device of those  
Her nearest kin: she thought they knew  
the laws.

But for herself, she knew but little law,  
And nothing of the titles to the crown;  
She had no desire for that, and wrung  
her hands,

And trusted God would save her thro' the  
blood

Of Jesus Christ alone.

*Stafford.* Pray you go on.

*Bagenhall.* Then knelt and said the  
Miserere Mei—

But all in English, mark you; rose again,  
And, when the headsman pray'd to be  
forgiven,

Said, 'You will give me my true crown  
at last,

But do it quickly;' then all wept but  
she,

Who changed not colour when she saw  
the block,

But ask'd him, childlike: 'Will you take  
it off

Before I lay me down?' 'No, Madam,'  
he said,

Gasping; and when her innocent eyes  
were bound,

She, with her poor blind hands feeling—  
'where is it?

Where is it?'—You must fancy that  
which follow'd,

If you have heart to do it!

*Crowd (in the distance).* God save  
their Graces!

*Stafford.* Their Graces, our disgraces!  
God confound them!

Why, she's grown bloodier! when I last  
was here,

This was against her conscience—would  
be murder!

*Bagenhall.* The 'Thou shalt do no  
murder,' which God's hand  
Wrote on her conscience, Mary rubb'd  
out pale—

She could not make it white—and over  
that,

Traced in the blackest text of Hell—  
'Thou shalt!'

And sign'd it—Mary!

*Stafford.* Philip and the Pope  
Must have sign'd too. I hear this  
Legate's coming

To bring us absolution from the Pope.  
The Lords and Commons will bow down  
before him—

You are of the house? what will you do,  
Sir Ralph?

*Bagenhall.* And why should I be  
bolder than the rest,

Or honester than all?

*Stafford.* But, sir, if I—  
And oversea they say this state of yours  
Hath no more mortice than a tower of  
cards;

And that a puff would do it—then if I  
And others made that move I touch'd  
upon,

Back'd by the power of France, and land-  
ing here,

Came with a sudden splendour, shout,  
and show,

And dazzled men and deafen'd by some  
bright

Loud venture, and the people so unquiet—  
And I the race of murder'd Bucking-  
ham—

Not for myself, but for the kingdom—  
Sir,

I trust that you would fight along with us.

*Bagenhall.* No; you would fling your  
lives into the gulf.

*Stafford.* But if this Philip, as he's  
like to do,

Left Mary a wife-widow here alone,  
Set up a viceroy, sent his myriads hither

To seize upon the forts and fleet, and  
make us

A Spanish province; would you not fight  
then?

*Bagenhall.* I think I should fight then.  
*Stafford.* I am sure of it.

Hist! there's the face coming on here of  
one

Who knows me. I must leave you.

Fare you well,

You'll hear of me again.

*Bagenhall.* Upon the scaffold.  
[*Exeunt.*]

SCENE II.—ROOM IN WHITEHALL  
PALACE.

MARY. *Enter PHILIP and  
CARDINAL POLE.*

*Pole.* Ave Maria, gratia plena, Benedic-  
ta tu in mulieribus.

*Mary.* Loyal and royal cousin,  
humblest thanks.

Had you a pleasant voyage up the river?

*Pole.* We had your royal barge, and  
that same chair,

Or rather throne of purple, on the deck.

Our silver cross sparkled before the  
prow,

The ripples twinkled at their diamond-  
dance,

The boats that follow'd were as glowing-  
gay

As regal gardens; and your flocks of  
swans,

As fair and white as angels; and your  
shores

Wore in mine eyes the green of Paradise.

My foreign friends, who dream'd us  
blanketed

In ever-closing fog, were much amazed  
To find as fair a sun as might have flash'd

Upon their lake of Garda, fire the  
Thames;

Our voyage by sea was all but miracle;  
And here the river flowing from the

sea,  
Not toward it (for they thought not of

our tides),  
Seem'd as a happy miracle to make

glide—  
In quiet—home your banish'd country-  
man.

*Mary.* We heard that you were sick  
in Flanders, cousin.

*Pole.* A dizziness.

*Mary.* And how came  
you round again?

*Pole.* The scarlet thread of Rahab  
saved her life;

And mine, a little letting of the blood.

*Mary.* Well? now?

*Pole.* Ay, cousin, as the  
heathen giant

Had but to touch the ground, his force  
return'd—

Thus, after twenty years of banishment,  
Feeling my native land beneath my foot,

I said thereto: 'Ah, native land of mine,  
Thou art much beholden to this foot of

mine,  
That hastes with full commission from  
the Pope

To absolve thee from thy guilt of heresy.  
Thou hast disgraced me and attainted me,

And mark'd me ev'n as Cain, and I return  
As Peter, but to bless thee: make me well.'

Methinks the good land heard me, for to-  
day

My heart beats twenty, when I see you,  
cousin.

Ah, gentle cousin, since your Herod's  
death,

How oft hath Peter knock'd at Mary's  
gate!

And Mary would have risen and let him in,  
But, Mary, there were those within the

house  
Who would not have it.

*Mary.* True, good cousin Pole;  
And there were also those without the

house  
Who would not have it.

*Pole.* I believe so, cousin.  
State-policy and church-policy are con-  
joint,

But Janus-faces looking diverse ways.  
I fear the Emperor much misvalued me.

But all is well; 'twas ev'n the will of God,  
Who, waiting till the time had ripen'd,

now,  
Makes me his mouth of holy greeting.

'Hail,  
Daughter of God, and saver of the faith.

Sit benedictus fructus ventris tui!'

*Mary.* Ah, heaven!

*Pole.* Unwell; your Grace?

*Mary.* No, cousin, happy—  
Happy to see you; never yet so happy  
Since I was crown'd.

*Pole.* Sweet cousin, you forget

That long low minster where you gave  
your hand  
To this great Catholic King.

*Philip.* Well said, Lord Legate.

*Mary.* Nay, not well said; I thought  
of you, my liege,

Ev'n as I spoke.

*Philip.* Ay, Madam; my Lord Paget  
Waits to present our Council to the  
Legate.

Sit down here, all; Madam, between us  
you.

*Pole.* Lo, now you are enclosed with  
boards of cedar,

Our little sister of the Song of Songs!  
You are doubly fenced and shielded sit-  
ting here

Between the two most high-set thrones  
on earth,

The Emperor's highness happily symbol'd  
by

The King your husband, the Pope's  
Holiness

By mine own self.

*Mary.* True, cousin, I am happy.  
When will you that we summon both our  
houses

To take this absolution from your lips,  
And be regather'd to the Papal fold?

*Pole.* In Britain's calendar the bright-  
est day

Beheld our rough forefathers break their  
Gods,

And clasp the faith in Christ; but after  
that

Might not St. Andrew's be her happiest  
day?

*Mary.* Then these shall meet upon  
St. Andrew's day.

*Enter PAGET, who presents the Council.  
Dumb show.*

*Pole.* I am an old man wearied with  
my journey,

Ev'n with my joy. Permit me to with-  
draw.

To Lambeth?

*Philip.* Ay, Lambeth has ousted  
Cranmer.

It was not meet the heretic swine should  
live

In Lambeth.

*Mary.* There or anywhere, or at all.

*Philip.* We have had it swept and  
garnish'd after him.

*Pole.* Not for the seven devils to enter  
in?

*Philip.* No, for we trust they parted  
in the swine.

*Pole.* True, and I am the Angel of  
the Pope.

Farewell, your Graces.

*Philip.* Nay, not here — to me;  
I will go with you to the waterside.

*Pole.* Not be my Charon to the counter  
side?

*Philip.* No, my Lord Legate, the  
Lord Chancellor goes.

*Pole.* And unto no dead world; but  
Lambeth palace,

Henceforth a centre of the living faith.

[*Exeunt Philip, Pole, Paget, etc.*

*Manet Mary.*

*Mary.* He hath awaked! he hath  
awaked!

He stirs within the darkness!

Oh, Philip, husband! now thy love to  
mine

Will cling more close, and those bleak  
manners thaw,

That make me shamed and tongue-tied  
in my love.

The second Prince of Peace —

The great unborn defender of the Faith,  
Who will avenge me of mine enemies —

He comes, and my star rises.

The stormy Wyatts and Northumberland,  
The proud ambitions of Elizabeth,

And all her fieriest partisans — are pale  
Before my star!

The light of this new learning wanes and  
dies:

The ghosts of Luther and Zuinglius  
fade

Into the deathless hell which is their  
doom

Before my star!

His sceptre shall go forth from Ind to Ind!  
His sword shall hew the heretic peoples

down!

His faith shall clothe the world that will  
be his,

Like universal air and sunshine! Open,  
Ye everlasting gates! The King is here! —

My star, my son!

*Enter* PHILIP, DUKE OF ALVA, *etc.*

Oh, Philip, come with me;  
Good news I have to tell you, news to  
make

Both of us happy — ay, the Kingdom too.  
Nay, come with me — one moment!

*Philip (to Alva).* More than that:  
There was one here of late — William the  
Silent

They call him — he is free enough in talk,  
But tells me nothing. You will be, we  
trust,

Sometime the viceroy of those provinces —  
He must deserve his surname better.

*Alva.* Ay, sir;  
Inherit the Great Silence.

*Philip.* True; the provinces  
Are hard to rule and must be hardly  
ruled;

Most fruitful, yet, indeed, an empty rind,  
All hollow'd out with stinging heresies;  
And for their heresies, Alva, they will  
fight;

You must break them or they break you.  
*Alva (proudly).* The first.

*Philip.* Good!  
Well, Madam, this new happiness of mine?  
[*Exeunt.*]

*Enter* THREE PAGES.

*First Page.* News, mates! a miracle,  
a miracle! news!  
The bells must ring; Te Deums must be  
sung;

The Queen hath felt the motion of her  
habe!

*Second Page.* Ay; but see here!  
*First Page.* See what?

*Second Page.* This paper, Dickon.  
I found it fluttering at the palace gates: —  
'The Queen of England is delivered of a  
dead dog!'

*Third Page.* These are the things  
that madden her. Fie upon it!

*First Page.* Ay; but I hear she hath  
a dropsy, lad,

Or a high-dropsy, as the doctors call it.  
*Third Page.* Fie on her dropsy, so  
she have a dropsy!

I know that she was ever sweet to me.  
*First Page.* For thou and thine are  
Roman to the core.

*Third Page.* So thou and thine must  
be. Take heed!

*First Page.* Not I,  
And whether this flash of news be false  
or true,

So the wine run, and there be revelry,  
Content am I. Let all the steeples  
clash,

Till the sun dance, as upon Easter Day.  
[*Exeunt.*]

SCENE III. — GREAT HALL IN  
WHITEHALL.

*At the far end a dais. On this three  
chairs, two under one canopy for MARY  
and PHILIP, another on the right of  
these for POLE. Under the dais on  
POLE'S side, ranged along the wall,  
sit all the Spiritual Peers, and along  
the wall opposite, all the Temporal.  
The Commons on cross benches in front,  
a line of approach to the dais between  
them. In the foreground, SIR RALPH  
BAGENHALL and other Members of the  
Commons.*

*First Member.* St. Andrew's day; sit  
close, sit close, we are friends.  
Is reconciled the word? the Pope again?  
It must be thus; and yet, cocksbody!  
how strange

That Gardiner, once so one with all of us  
Against this foreign marriage, should  
have yielded

So utterly! — strange! but stranger still  
that he,

So fierce against the headship of the  
Pope,  
Should play the second actor in this  
pageant

That brings him in; such a cameleon he!  
*Second Member.* This Gardiner turn'd  
his coat in Henry's time;

The serpent that hath slough'd will  
slough again.

*Third Member.* Tut, then we all are  
serpents.

*Second Member.* Speak for yourself.

*Third Member.* Ay, and for Gardiner!  
being English citizen,

How should he bear a bridegroom out of  
Spain?

The Queen would have him! being  
English churchman  
How should he bear the headship of the  
Pope?

The Queen would have it! Statesmen  
that are wise

Shape a necessity, as a sculptor clay,  
To their own model.

*Second Member.* Statesmen that are  
wise

Take truth herself for model. What say  
you? [*To Sir Ralph Bagenhall.*  
*Bagenhall.* We talk and talk.

*First Member.* Ay, and what use to  
talk?

Philip's no sudden alien—the Queen's  
husband,

He's here, and king, or will be—yet  
cocksboddy!

So hated here! I watch'd a hive of late;  
My seven-years' friend was with me, my  
young boy;

Out crept a wasp, with half the swarm  
behind.

'Philip!' says he. I had to cuff the rogue  
For infant treason.

*Third Member.* But they say that bees,  
If any creeping life invade their hive  
Too gross to be thrust out, will build him  
round,

And bind him in from harming of their  
combs.

And Philip by these articles is bound  
From stirring hand or foot to wrong the  
realm.

*Second Member.* By bonds of beeswax  
like your creeping thing;  
But your wise bees had stung him first  
to death.

*Third Member.* Hush, hush!  
You wrong the Chancellor: the clauses  
added

To that same treaty which the Emperor  
sent us

Were mainly Gardiner's: that no foreigner  
Hold office in the household, fleet, forts,  
army;

That if the Queen should die without a  
child,

The bond between the kingdoms be  
dissolved;

That Philip should not mix us any way  
With his French wars—

*Second Member.* Ay, ay, but what  
security,

Good sir, for this, if Philip—

*Third Member.* Peace—the Queen,  
Philip, and Pole. [*All rise, and stand.*

*Enter MARY, PHILIP, and POLE.*

[*Gardiner conducts them to the three  
chairs of state. Philip sits on the  
Queen's left, Pole on her right.*

*Gardiner.* Our short-lived sun, before  
his winter plunge,  
Laughs at the last red leaf, and Andrew's  
day.

*Mary.* Should not this day be held  
in after years  
More solemn than of old?

*Philip.* Madam, my wish  
Echoes your Majesty's.

*Pole.* It shall be so.

*Gardiner.* Mine echoes both your  
Graces'; (*aside*) but the Pope—  
Can we not have the Catholic church as  
well

Without as with the Italian? if we cannot,  
Why then the Pope.

My Lords of the upper house,  
And ye, my masters, of the lower house,  
Do ye stand fast by that which ye resolved?

*Voices.* We do.

*Gardiner.* And be you all one mind  
to supplicate  
The Legate here for pardon, and acknow-  
ledge

The primacy of the Pope?

*Voices.* We are all one mind.

*Gardiner.* Then must I play the vas-  
sal to this Pole. [*Aside.*

[*He draws a paper from under his  
robes and presents it to the King  
and Queen, who look through it  
and return it to him; then ascends  
a tribune and reads.*

We, the Lords Spiritual and Temporal,  
And Commons here in Parliament assem-  
bled,

Presenting the whole body of this realm  
Of England, and dominions of the same,  
Do make most humble suit unto your  
Majesties,

In our own name and that of all the state,  
That by your gracious means and inter-  
cession



Our supplication be exhibited  
To the Lord Cardinal Pole, sent here as  
Legate

From our most Holy Father Julius, Pope,  
And from the Apostolic see of Rome;  
And do declare our penitence and grief  
For our long schism and disobedience,  
Either in making laws and ordinances  
Against the Holy Father's primacy,  
Or else by doing or by speaking aught  
Which might impugn or prejudice the  
same;

By this our supplication promising,  
As well for our own selves as all the realm,  
That now we be and ever shall be quick,  
Under and with your Majesties' authori-  
ties,

To do to the utmost all that in us lies  
Towards the abrogation and repeal  
Of all such laws and ordinances made;  
Whereon we humbly pray your Majesties,  
As persons undefiled with our offence,  
So to set forth this humble suit of ours  
That we the rather by your intercession  
May from the Apostolic see obtain,  
Thro' this most reverend Father, absolu-  
tion,  
And full release from danger of all  
censures

Of Holy Church that we be fall'n into,  
So that we may, as children penitent,  
Be once again received into the bosom  
And unity of Universal Church;  
And that this noble realm thro' after years  
May in this unity and obedience  
Unto the holy see and reigning Pope  
Serve God and both your Majesties.

*Voices.* Amen. [*All sit.*

[*He again presents the petition to the  
King and Queen, who hand it  
reverentially to Pole.*

*Pole (sitting).* This is the loveliest day  
that ever smiled

On England. All her breath should,  
incenselike,  
Rise to the heavens in grateful praise of  
Him

Who now recalls her to His ancient fold.  
Lo! once again God to this realm hath  
given

A token of His more especial Grace;  
For as this people were the first of all  
The islands call'd into the dawning church

Out of the dead, deep night of heathen-  
dom,

So now are these the first whom God  
hath given

Grace to repent and sorrow for their  
schism;

And if your penitence be not mockery,  
Oh how the blessed angels who rejoice  
Over one saved do triumph at this hour  
In the reborn salvation of a land  
So noble.

[*A pause.*

For ourselves we do protest  
That our commission is to heal, not harm;  
We come not to condemn, but reconcile;  
We come not to compel, but call again;  
We come not to destroy, but edify;  
Nor yet to question things already done;  
These are forgiven — matters of the past —  
And range with jetsam and with offal  
thrown

Into the blind sea of forgetfulness.

[*A pause.*

Ye have reversed the attainder laid on us  
By him who sack'd the house of God;  
and we,

Amplier than any field on our poor earth  
Can render thanks in fruit for being sown,  
Do here and now repay you sixty-fold,  
A hundred, yea, a thousand thousand-fold,  
With heaven for earth.

[*Rising and stretching forth his  
hands. All kneel but Sir Ralph  
Bagenhall, who rises and remains  
standing.*

The Lord who hath redeem'd us  
With His own blood, and wash'd us from  
our sins,

To purchase for Himself a stainless bride;  
He, whom the Father hath appointed  
head

Of all his church, He by His mercy  
absolve you!

[*A pause.*

And we by that authority Apostolic  
Given unto us, his Legate, by the Pope,  
Our Lord and Holy Father, Julius,  
God's Vicar and Vicegerent upon earth,  
Do here absolve you and deliver you  
And every one of you, and all the realm  
And its dominions from all heresy,  
All schism, and from all and every cen-  
sure,

Judgment, and pain accruing thereupon;  
And also we restore you to the bosom

And unity of Universal Church.

[Turning to Gardiner.

Our letters of commission will declare  
this plainlier.

[Queen heard sobbing. Cries of  
Amen! Amen! Some of the  
Members embrace one another.  
All but Sir Ralph Bagenhall pass  
out into the neighbouring chapel,  
whence is heard the Te Deum.

*Bagenhall.* We strove against the  
papacy from the first,  
In William's time, in our first Edward's  
time,

And in my master Henry's time; but now,  
The unity of Universal Church,  
Mary would have it; and this Gardiner  
follows;

The unity of Universal Hell,  
Philip would have it; and this Gardiner  
follows!

A Parliament of imitative apes!

Sheep at the gap which Gardiner takes,  
who not

Believes the Pope, nor any of them  
believe —

These spaniel-Spaniard English of the  
time,

Who rub their fawning noses in the dust,  
For that is Philip's gold-dust, and adore  
This Vicar of their Vicar. Would I had  
been

Born Spaniard! I had held my head up  
then.

I am ashamed that I am Bagenhall,  
English.

*Enter OFFICER.*

*Officer.* Sir Ralph Bagenhall!

*Bagenhall.* What of that?

*Officer.* You were the one sole man  
in either house

Who stood upright when both the houses  
fell.

*Bagenhall.* The houses fell!

*Officer.* I mean the houses knelt  
Before the Legate.

*Bagenhall.* Do not scrimp your  
phrase,

But stretch it wider; say when England  
fell.

*Officer.* I say you were the one sole  
man who stood.

*Bagenhall.* I am the one sole man in  
either house,  
Perchance in England, loves her like a  
son.

*Officer.* Well, you one man, because  
you stood upright,  
Her Grace the Queen commands you to  
the Tower.

*Bagenhall.* As traitor, or as heretic,  
or for what?

*Officer.* If any man in any way would  
be  
The one man, he shall be so to his cost.

*Bagenhall.* What! will she have my  
head?

*Officer.* A round fine likelier.  
Your pardon. [Calling to Attendant.  
By the river to the Tower. [Exeunt.

SCENE IV. — WHITEHALL. A ROOM  
IN THE PALACE.

MARY, GARDINER, POLE, PAGET,  
BONNER, etc.

*Mary.* The King and I, my Lords,  
now that all traitors  
Against our royal state have lost the heads  
Wherewith they plotted in their treason-  
ous malice,

Have talk'd together, and are well agreed  
That those old statutes touching Lollard-  
ism

To bring the heretic to the stake, should  
be

No longer a dead letter, but requicken'd.  
*One of the Council.* Why, what hath  
fluster'd Gardiner? how he rubs  
His forelock!

*Paget.* I have changed a word with  
him

In coming, and may change a word again.  
*Gardiner.* Madam, your Highness is  
our sun, the King

And you together our two suns in one;  
And so the beams of both may shine upon  
us,

The faith that seem'd to droop will feel  
your light,

Lift head, and flourish; yet not light  
alone,

There must be heat — there must be heat  
enough

To scorch and wither heresy to the root.  
For what saith Christ? 'Compel them  
to come in.'

And what saith Paul? 'I would they  
were cut off  
That trouble you.' Let the dead letter  
live!

Trace it in fire, that all the louts to  
whom

Their A B C is darkness, clowns and  
grooms

May read it! so you quash rebellion too,  
For heretic and traitor are all one:

Two vipers of one breed—an amphishæna,  
Each end a sting: Let the dead letter  
burn!

*Paget.* Yet there be some disloyal  
Catholics,

And many heretics loyal; heretic throats  
Cried no God-bless-her to the Lady Jane,  
But shouted in Queen Mary. So there be  
Some traitor-heretic, there is axe and  
cord.

To take the lives of others that are loyal,  
And by the churchman's pitiless doom of  
fire,

Were but a thankless policy in the crown,  
Ay, and against itself; for there are  
many.

*Mary.* If we could burn out heresy,  
my Lord Paget,

We reck not tho' we lost this crown of  
England—

Ay! tho' it were ten Englands!

*Gardiner.* Right, your Grace.

Paget, you are all for this poor life of ours,  
And care but little for the life to be.

*Paget.* I have some time, for curious-  
ness, my Lord,

Watch'd children playing at *their* life to  
be,

And cruel at it, killing helpless flies;  
Such is our time—all times for aught I  
know.

*Gardiner.* We kill the heretics that  
sting the soul—

They, with right reason, flies that prick  
the flesh.

*Paget.* They had not reach'd right  
reason; little children!

They kill'd but for their pleasure and the  
power

They felt in killing.

*Gardiner.* A spice of Satan, ha!  
Why, good! what then? granted!—we  
are fallen creatures;

Look to your Bible, Paget! we are fallen.

*Paget.* I am but of the laity, my Lord  
Bishop,

And may not read your Bible, yet I found  
One day, a wholesome scripture, 'Little  
children,

Love one another.'

*Gardiner.* Did you find a scripture,  
'I come not to bring peace but a sword'?

The sword

Is in her Grace's hand to smite with.  
*Paget,*

You stand up here to fight for heresy,  
You are more than guess'd at as a heretic,  
And on the steep-up track of the true  
faith

Your lapses are far seen.

*Paget.* The faultless Gardiner!

*Mary.* You brawl beyond the ques-  
tion; speak, Lord Legate!

*Pole.* Indeed, I cannot follow with  
your Grace:

Rather would say—the shepherd doth  
not kill

The sheep that wander from his flock, but  
sends

His careful dog to bring them to the fold.  
Look to the Netherlands, wherein have  
been

Such holocausts of heresy! to what end?  
For yet the faith is not established there.

*Gardiner.* The end's not come.

*Pole.* No—nor this way  
will come,

Seeing there lie two ways to every end,  
A better and a worse—the worse is here  
To persecute, because to persecute  
Makes a faith hated, and is furthermore  
No perfect witness of a perfect faith

In him who persecutes: when men are  
tost

On tides of strange opinion, and not sure  
Of their own selves, they are wroth with  
their own selves,

And thence with others; then, who lights  
the faggot?

Not the full faith, no, but the lurking  
doubt.

Old Rome, that first made martyrs in the  
Church,

Trembled for her own gods, for these  
were trembling —

But when did our Rome tremble?

*Paget.* Did she not

In Henry's time and Edward's?

*Pole.* What, my Lord!

The Church on Peter's rock? never! I  
have seen

A pine in Italy that cast its shadow  
Athwart a cataract; firm stood the pine—  
The cataract shook the shadow. To my  
mind,

The cataract typed the headlong plunge  
and fall

Of heresy to the pit: the pine was Rome.  
You see, my Lords,

It was the shadow of the Church that  
trembled;

Your church was but the shadow of a  
church,

Wanting the Papal mitre.

*Gardiner (muttering).* Here betropes.

*Pole.* And tropes are good to clothe a  
naked truth,

And make it look more seemly.

*Gardiner.* Tropes again!

*Pole.* You are hard to please. Then  
without tropes, my Lord,

An overmuch severeness, I repeat,  
When faith is wavering makes the  
waverer pass

Into more settled hatred of the doctrines  
Of those who rule, which hatred by and  
by

Involves the ruler (thus there springs to  
light

That Centaur of a monstrous Common-  
weal,

The traitor-heretic) then tho' some may  
quail,

Yet others are that dare the stake and  
fire,

And their strong torment bravely borne,  
begets

An admiration and an indignation,  
And hot desire to imitate; so the plague  
Of schism spreads; were there but three  
or four

Of these misleaders, yet I would not say  
Burn! and we cannot burn whole towns;  
they are many,

As my Lord Paget says.

*Gardiner.* Yet my Lord Cardinal —

*Pole.* I am your Legate; please you  
let me finish.

Methinks that under our Queen's regimen  
We might go softer than with crimson  
rowel

And streaming lash. When Herod-  
Henry first

Began to batter at your English Church,  
This was the cause, and hence the judg-  
ment on her.

She seethed with such adulteries, and the  
lives

Of many among your churchmen were so  
foul

That heaven wept and earth blush'd. I  
would advise

That we should thoroughly cleanse the  
Church within

Before these bitter statutes be requick-  
en'd.

So after that when she once more is seen  
White as the light, the spotless bride of  
Christ,

Like Christ himself on Tabor, possibly  
The Lutheran may be won to her again;  
Till when, my Lords, I counsel tolerance.

*Gardiner.* What, if a mad dog bit  
your hand, my Lord,

Would you not chop the bitten finger off,  
Lest your whole body should madden  
with the poison?

I would not, were I Queen, tolerate the  
heretic,

No, not an hour. The ruler of a land  
Is bounden by his power and place to see  
His people be not poison'd. Tolerate  
them!

Why? do they tolerate you? Nay, many  
of them

Would burn — have burnt each other;  
call they not

The one true faith, a loathsome idol-  
worship?

Beware, Lord Legate, of a heavier crime  
Than heresy is itself; beware, I say,  
Lest men accuse you of indifference  
To all faiths, all religion; for you know  
Right well that you yourself have been  
supposed

Tainted with Lutheranism in Italy.

*Pole (angered).* But you, my Lord,  
beyond all supposition,

In clear and open day were congruent

With that vile Cranmer in the accursed lie  
Of good Queen Catharine's divorce —  
the spring  
Of all those evils that have flow'd upon us;  
For you yourself have truckled to the  
tyrant,  
And done your best to bastardise our  
Queen,  
For which God's righteous judgment fell  
upon you  
In your five years of imprisonment, my  
Lord,  
Under young Edward. Who so bolster'd  
up  
The gross King's headship of the Church,  
or more  
Denied the Holy Father!

*Gardiner.* Ha! what! eh?  
But you, my Lord, a polish'd gentleman,  
A bookman, flying from the heat and  
tussle,  
You lived among your vines and oranges,  
In your soft Italy yonder! You were  
sent for,  
You were appeal'd to, but you still  
preferr'd  
Your learned leisure. As for what I did  
I suffer'd and repented. You, Lord  
Legate  
And Cardinal-Deacon, have not now to  
learn  
That ev'n St. Peter in his time of fear  
Denied his Master, ay, and thrice, my  
Lord.

*Pole.* But not for five-and-twenty  
years, my Lord.

*Gardiner.* Ha! good! it seems then  
I was summon'd hither  
But to be mock'd and baited. Speak,  
friend Bonner,  
And tell this learned Legate he lacks zeal.  
The Church's evil is not as the King's,  
Cannot be heal'd by stroking. The mad  
bite  
Must have the cautery — tell him — and at  
once.  
What would'st thou do had'st thou his  
power, thou  
That layest so long in heretic bonds with  
me;  
Would'st thou not burn and blast them  
root and branch?

*Bonner.* Ay, after you, my Lord.

*Gardiner.* Nay, God's passion, before  
me! speak!

*Bonner.* I am on fire until I see them  
flame.

*Gardiner.* Ay, the psalm-singing  
weavers, cobblers, scum —

But this most noble prince Plantagenet,  
Our good Queen's cousin — dallying over  
seas

Even when his brother's, nay, his noble  
mother's,

Head fell —

*Pole.* Peace, madman!

Thou stirrest up a grief thou canst not  
fathom.

Thou Christian Bishop, thou Lord Chan-  
cellor

Of England! no more rein upon thine  
anger

Than any child! Thou mak'st me much  
ashamed

That I was for a moment wroth at thee.

*Mary.* I come for counsel and ye give  
me feuds,

Like dogs that set to watch their master's  
gate,

Fall, when the thief is ev'n within the  
walls,

To worrying one another. My Lord  
Chancellor,

You have an old trick of offending us;

And but that you are art and part with us  
In purging heresy, well we might, for this  
Your violence and much roughness to the

Legate,

Have shut you from our counsels.  
Cousin Pole,

You are fresh from brighter lands. Re-  
tire with me.

His Highness and myself (so you allow  
us)

Will let you learn in peace and privacy  
What power this cooler sun of England  
bath

In breeding godless vermin. And pray  
Heaven

That you may see according to our sight.  
Come, cousin.

[*Exeunt Queen and Pole, etc.*

*Gardiner.* Pole has the Plantagenet  
face,

But not the force made them our mightiest  
kings.

Fine eyes — but melancholy, irresolute —  
A fine beard, Bonner, a very full fine  
beard.

But a weak mouth, an indeterminate—ha?  
*Bonner.* Well, a weak mouth, per-  
chance.

*Gardiner.* And not like thine  
To gorge a heretic whole, roasted or raw.

*Bonner.* I'd do my best, my Lord;  
but yet the Legate

Is here as Pope and Master of the Church,  
And if he go not with you —

*Gardiner.* Tut, Master Bishop,  
Our bashful Legate, saw'st not how he  
flush'd?

Touch him upon his old heretical talk,  
He'll burn a diocese to prove his ortho-  
doxy.

And let him call me truckler. In those  
times,

Thou knowest we had to dodge, or duck,  
or die;

I kept my head for use of Holy Church;  
And see you, we shall have to dodge again,  
And let the Pope trample our rights, and  
plunge

His foreign fist into our island Church  
To plump the leaner pouch of Italy.

For a time, for a time.

Why? that these statutes may be put in  
force,

And that his fan may thoroughly purge  
his floor.

*Bonner.* So then you hold the Pope —  
*Gardiner.* I hold the Pope!

What do I hold him? what do I hold  
the Pope?

Come, come, the morsel stuck — this  
Cardinal's fault —

I have gulpt it down. I am wholly for  
the Pope,

Utterly and altogether for the Pope,  
The Eternal Peter of the changeless chair,  
Crown'd slave of slaves, and mitred king  
of kings,

God upon earth! what more? what would  
you have?

Hence, let's be gone.

*Enter USHER.*

*Usher.* Well that you be not gone,  
My Lord. The Queen, most wroth at  
first with you,

Is now content to grant you full forgive-  
ness,

So that you crave full pardon of the  
Legate.

I am sent to fetch you.

*Gardiner.* Doth Pole yield, sir, ha!  
Did you hear 'em? were you by?

*Usher.* I cannot tell you,  
His bearing is so courtly-delicate;

And yet methinks he falters: their two  
Graces

Do so dear-cousin and royal-cousin him,  
So press on him the duty which as Legate  
He owes himself, and with such royal  
smiles —

*Gardiner.* Smiles that burn men.  
Bonner, it will be carried.

He falters, ha? 'fore God, we change and  
change;

Men now are bow'd and old, the doctors  
tell you,

At three-score years; then if we change  
at all

We needs must do it quickly; it is an age  
Of brief life, and brief purpose, and brief  
patience,

As I have shown to-day. I am sorry for it  
If Pole be like to turn. Our old friend

Cranmer,  
Your more especial love, hath turn'd so  
often,

He knows not where he stands, which,  
if this pass,

We two shall have to teach him; let 'em  
look to it,

Cranmer and Hooper, Ridley and Latimer,  
Rogers and Ferrar, for their time is come,  
Their hour is hard at hand, their 'dies  
Irae,'

Their 'dies Illa,' which will test their sect.  
I feel it but a duty — you will find in it  
Pleasure as well as duty, worthy Bonner, —  
To test their sect. Sir, I attend the Queen  
To crave most humble pardon — of her  
most

Royal, Infallible, Papal Legate-cousin.

[*Exeunt.*]

SCENE V. — WOODSTOCK.

ELIZABETH, LADY IN WAITING.

*Elizabeth.* So they have sent poor  
Courtenay over sea.



*Lady.* And banish'd us to Woodstock,  
and the fields.

The colours of our queen are green and  
white,

These fields are only green, they make  
me gape.

*Elizabeth.* There's whitethorn, girl.

*Lady.* Ay, for an hour in May.  
But court is always May, buds out in  
masques,

Breaks into feather'd merriments, and  
flowers

In silken pageants. Why do they keep  
us here?

Why still suspect your Grace?

*Elizabeth.* Hard upon both.  
[Writes on the window with a diamond.

Much suspected, of me  
Nothing proven can be.  
Quoth Elizabeth, prisoner.

*Lady.* What hath your Highness  
written?

*Elizabeth.* A true rhyme.

*Lady.* Cut with a diamond; so to last  
like truth.

*Elizabeth.* Ay, if truth last.

*Lady.* But truth, they say, will out,  
So it must last. It is not like a word,  
That comes and goes in uttering.

*Elizabeth.* Truth, a word!  
The very Truth and very Word are one.  
But truth of story, which I glanced at,  
girl,

Is like a word that comes from olden  
days,

And passes thro' the peoples: every tongue  
Alters it passing, till it spells and speaks  
Quite other than at first.

*Lady.* I do not follow.

*Elizabeth.* How many names in the  
long sweep of time  
That so foreshortens greatness, may but  
hang

On the chance mention of some fool that  
once

Brake bread with us, perhaps: and my  
poor chronicle

Is but of glass. Sir Henry Bedingfield  
May split it for a spite.

*Lady.* God grant it last,  
And witness to your Grace's innocence,  
Till doomsday melt it.

*Elizabeth.* Or a second fire,  
Like that which lately crackled underfoot  
And in this very chamber, fuse the glass,  
And char us back again into the dust  
We spring from. Never peacock against  
rain

Scream'd as you did for water.

*Lady.* And I got it.  
I woke Sir Henry—and he's true to  
you—

I read his honest horror in his eyes.

*Elizabeth.* Or true to you?

*Lady.* Sir Henry Bedingfield!  
I will have no man true to me, your  
Grace,

But one that pares his nails; to me? the  
clown!

*Elizabeth.* Out, girl! you wrong a  
noble gentleman.

*Lady.* For, like his cloak, his man-  
ners want the nap  
And gloss of court; but of this fire he  
says,

Nay swears, it was no wicked wilfulness,  
Only a natural chance.

*Elizabeth.* A chance—perchance  
One of those wicked wilfuls that men  
make,

Nor shame to call it nature. Nay, I know  
They hunt my blood. Save for my daily  
range

Among the pleasant fields of Holy Writ  
I might despair. But there hath some  
one come;

The house is all in movement. Hence,  
and see. [Exit Lady.

*Milkmaid (singing without).*

Shame upon you, Robin,  
Shame upon you now!  
Kiss me would you? with my hands  
Milking the cow?  
Daisies grow again,  
Kingcups blow again,  
And you came and kiss'd me milking the cow.

Robin came behind me,  
Kiss'd me well I vow;  
Cuff him could I? with my hands  
Milking the cow?  
Swallows fly again,  
Cuckoos cry again,  
And you came and kiss'd me milking the cow.

Come, Robin, Robin,  
 Come and kiss me now;  
 Help it can I? with my hands  
 Milking the cow?  
 Ringdoves coo again,  
 All things woo again.  
 Come behind and kiss me milking the cow!

*Elizabeth.* Right honest and red-  
 cheek'd; Robin was violent,  
 And she was crafty — a sweet violence,  
 And a sweet craft. I would I were a  
 milkmaid,  
 To sing, love, marry, churn, brew, bake,  
 and die,  
 Then have my simple headstone by the  
 church,  
 And all things lived and ended honestly.  
 I could not if I would. I am Harry's  
 daughter:  
 Gardiner would have my head. They are  
 not sweet,  
 The violence and the craft that do divide  
 The world of nature; what is weak must  
 lie;  
 The lion needs but roar to guard his  
 young;  
 The lapwing lies, says 'here' when they  
 are there.  
 Threaten the child; 'I'll scourge you if  
 you did it:'  
 What weapon hath the child, save his  
 soft tongue,  
 To say 'I did not'? and my rod's the  
 block.  
 I never lay my head upon the pillow  
 But that I think, 'Wilt thou lie there to-  
 morrow?'  
 How oft the falling axe, that never fell,  
 Hath shock'd me back into the daylight  
 truth  
 That it may fall to-day! Those damp,  
 black, dead  
 Nights in the Tower; dead — with the  
 fear of death  
 Too dead ev'n for a death-watch! Toll  
 of a bell,  
 Stroke of a clock, the scurrying of a rat  
 Affrighted me, and then delighted me,  
 For there was life — And there was life  
 in death —  
 The little murder'd princes, in a pale light,  
 Rose hand in hand, and whisper'd, 'Come  
 away!

The civil wars are gone for evermore:  
 Thou last of all the Tudors, come away!  
 With us in peace!' The last? It was a  
 dream;  
 I must not dream, not wink, but watch.  
 She has gone,  
 Maid Marian to her Robin — by and by  
 Both happy! a fox may filch a hen by  
 night,  
 And make a morning outcry in the yard;  
 But there's no Renard here to 'catch her  
 tripping.'  
 Catch me who can; yet, sometime I have  
 wish'd  
 That I were caught, and kill'd away at  
 once  
 Out of the flutter. The gray rogue,  
 Gardiner,  
 Went on his knees, and pray'd me to  
 confess  
 In Wyatt's business, and to cast myself  
 Upon the good Queen's mercy; ay, when,  
 my Lord?  
 God save the Queen! My jailor —

*Enter SIR HENRY BEDINGFIELD.*

*Bedingfield.* One, whose bolts,  
 That jail you from free life, bar you from  
 death.  
 There haunt some Papist ruffians here-  
 about  
 Would murder you.  
*Elizabeth.* I thank you heartily, sir,  
 But I am royal, tho' your prisoner,  
 And God hath blest or cursed me with a  
 nose —  
 Your boots are from the horses.  
*Bedingfield.* Ay, my Lady.  
 When next there comes a missive from  
 the Queen  
 It shall be all my study for one hour  
 To rose and lavender my horsiness,  
 Before I dare to glance upon your Grace.  
*Elizabeth.* A missive from the Queen:  
 last time she wrote,  
 I had like to have lost my life: it takes  
 my breath:  
 O God, sir, do you look upon your boots,  
 Are you so small a man? Help me:  
 what think you,  
 Is it life or death?  
*Bedingfield.* I thought not on my  
 boots;

The devil take all boots were ever made  
Since man went barefoot. See, I lay it  
here,

For I will come no nearer to your Grace;

[*Laying down the letter.*]

And, whether it bring you bitter news or  
sweet,

And God hath given your Grace a nose,  
or not,

I'll help you, if I may.

*Elizabeth.* Your pardon, then;

It is the heat and narrowness of the  
cage

That makes the captive testy; with free  
wing

The world were all one Araby. Leave  
me now,

Will you, companion to myself, sir?

*Bedingfield.* Will I?

With most exceeding willingness, I will;

You know I never come till I be call'd.

[*Exit.*]

*Elizabeth.* It lies there folded: is there  
venom in it?

A snake—and if I touch it, it may sting.  
Come, come, the worst!

Best wisdom is to know the worst at once.

[*Reads:*]

'It is the King's wish, that you  
should wed Prince Philibert of Savoy.  
You are to come to Court on the instant;  
and think of this in your coming.

'MARY THE QUEEN.'

Think! I have many thoughts;

I think there may be birdlime here for  
me;

I think they fain would have me from the  
realm;

I think the Queen may never bear a  
child;

I think that I may be sometime the  
Queen,

Then, Queen indeed: no foreign prince  
or priest

Should fill my throne, myself upon the  
steps.

I think I will not marry anyone,

Specially not this landless Philibert

Of Savoy; but, if Philip menace me,

I think that I will play with Philibert,—

As once the Holy Father did with mine,

Before my father married my good  
mother,—  
For fear of Spain.

*Enter LADY.*

*Lady.* O Lord! your Grace, your  
Grace,

I feel so happy: it seems that we shall fly  
These bald, blank fields, and dance into  
the sun

That shines on princes.

*Elizabeth.* Yet, a moment since,  
I wish'd myself the milkmaid singing  
here,

To kiss and cuff among the birds and  
flowers—

A right rough life and healthful.

*Lady.* But the wench

Hath her own troubles; she is weeping  
now;

For the wrong Robin took her at her word.  
Then the cow kick'd, and all her milk  
was spilt.

Your Highness such a milkmaid?

*Elizabeth.* I had kept

My Robins and my cows in sweeter order  
Had I been such.

*Lady.* (slyly). And had your Grace a  
Robin?

*Elizabeth.* Come, come, you are chill  
here; you want the sun

That shines at court; make ready for the  
journey.

Pray God, we 'scape the sunstroke.  
Ready at once. [*Exeunt.*]

SCENE VI.—LONDON. A ROOM IN  
THE PALACE.

LORD PETRE and LORD WILLIAM  
HOWARD.

*Petre.* You cannot see the Queen.  
Renard denied her,  
Ev'n now to me.

*Howard.* Their Flemish go-between  
And all-in-all. I came to thank her  
Majesty

For freeing my friend Bagenhall from  
the Tower;

A grace to me! Mercy, that herb-of-  
grace,

Flowers now but seldom.

*Petre.* Only now perhaps.  
Because the Queen hath been three days  
in tears  
For Philip's going — like the wild hedge-  
rose  
Of a soft winter, possible, not probable,  
However you have prov'n it.  
*Howard.* I must see her.

*Enter RENARD.*

*Renard.* My Lords, you cannot see  
her Majesty.

*Howard.* Why then the King! for I  
would have him bring it  
Home to the leisure wisdom of his Queen,  
Before he go, that since these statutes  
past,  
Gardiner out-Gardiners Gardiner in his  
heat,  
Bonner cannot out-Bonner his own self —  
Beast! — but they play with fire as chil-  
dren do,  
And burn the house. I know that these  
are breeding  
A fierce resolve and fixt heart-hate in men  
Against the King, the Queen, the Holy  
Father,  
The faith itself. Can I not see him?

*Renard.* Not now.  
And in all this, my Lord, her Majesty  
Is flint of flint, you may strike fire from  
her,  
Not hope to melt her. I will give your  
message.

[*Exeunt Petre and Howard.*]

*Enter PHILIP (musing).*

*Philip.* She will not have Prince  
Philibert of Savoy,  
I talk'd with her in vain — says she will  
live  
And die true maid — a goodly creature too.  
Would *she* had been the Queen! yet she  
must have him;  
She troubles England: that she breathes  
in England  
Is life and lungs to every rebel birth  
That passes out of embryo.

Simon Renard! —

This Howard, whom they fear, what was  
he saying?

*Renard.* What your imperial father  
said, my liege,

To deal with heresy gentlier. Gardiner  
burns,  
And Bonner burns; and it would seem  
this people  
Care more for our brief life in their wet  
land,  
Than yours in happier Spain. I told my  
Lord  
He should not vex her Highness; she  
would say  
These are the means God works with,  
that His church  
May flourish.

*Philip.* Ay, sir, but in statesmanship  
To strike too soon is oft to miss the blow.  
Thou knowest I bade my chaplain, Castro,  
preach  
Against these burnings.

*Renard.* And the Emperor  
Approved you, and when last he wrote,  
declared  
His comfort in your Grace that you were  
bland  
And affable to men of all estates,  
In hope to charm them from their hate of  
Spain.

*Philip.* In hope to crush all heresy  
under Spain.

But, Renard, I am sicker staying here  
Than any sea could make me passing  
hence,  
Tho' I be ever deadly sick at sea.  
So sick am I with biding for this child.  
Is it the fashion in this clime for women  
To go twelve months in bearing of a  
child?

The nurses yawn'd, the cradle gaped,  
they led  
Processions, chanted litanies, clash'd their  
bells,  
Shot off their lying cannon, and her  
priests  
Have preach'd, the fools, of this fair  
prince to come;  
Till, by St. James, I find myself the fool.  
Why do you lift your eyebrow at me  
thus?

*Renard.* I never saw your Highness  
moved till now.

*Philip.* So weary am I of this wet  
land of theirs,  
And every soul of man that breathes  
therein.

*Renard.* My liege, we must not drop  
the mask before

The masquerade is over —

*Philip.* — Have I dropt it?  
I have but shown a loathing face to you,  
Who knew it from the first.

*Enter MARY.*

*Mary (aside).* With *Renard.* Still  
Parleying with *Renard,* all the day with  
*Renard,*

And scarce a greeting all the day for me —  
And goes to-morrow. [*Exit Mary.*

*Philip (to Renard, who advances to  
him).* Well, sir, is there more?

*Renard (who has perceived the Queen).*  
May *Simon Renard* speak a single  
word?

*Philip.* Ay.

*Renard.* And be forgiven for it?

*Philip.* *Simon Renard*  
Knows me too well to speak a single  
word

That could not be forgiven.

*Renard.* Well, my liege,  
Your Grace hath a most chaste and loving  
wife.

*Philip.* Why not? The Queen of  
*Philip* should be chaste.

*Renard.* Ay, but, my Lord, you know  
what *Virgil* sings,

Woman is various and most mutable.

*Philip.* She play the harlot! never.

*Renard.* No, sire, no,  
Not dream'd of by the rabidest gospeller.  
There was a paper thrown into the palace,  
'The King hath wearied of his barren  
bride.'

She came upon it, read it, and then rent it,  
With all the rage of one who hates a  
truth

He cannot but allow. Sire, I would  
have you —

What should I say, I cannot pick my  
words —

Be somewhat less — majestic to your  
Queen.

*Philip.* Am I to change my manners,  
*Simon Renard,*

Because these islanders are brutal beasts?  
Or would you have me turn a sonneteer,  
And warble those brief-sighted eyes of  
hers?

*Renard.* Brief-sighted tho' they be,  
I have seen them, sire,

When you perchance were trifling royally  
With some fair dame of court, suddenly  
fill

With such fierce fire — had it been fire  
indeed

It would have burnt both speakers.

*Philip.* Ay, and then?

*Renard.* Sire, might it not be policy  
in some matter

Of small importance now and then to  
cede

A point to her demand?

*Philip.* Well, I am going.

*Renard.* For should her love when  
you are gone, my liege,

Witness these papers, there will not be  
wanting

Those that will urge her injury — should  
her love —

And I have known such women more  
than one —

Veer to the counterpoint, and jealousy

Hath in it an alchemic force to fuse

Almost into one metal love and hate, —

And she impress her wrongs upon her  
Council,

And these again upon her Parliament —

We are not loved here, and would be  
then perhaps

Not so well holpen in our wars with  
France,

As else we might be — here she comes.

*Enter MARY.*

*Mary.* O *Philip!*  
Nay, must you go indeed?

*Philip.* Madam, I must.

*Mary.* The parting of a husband and  
a wife

Is like the cleaving of a heart; one half  
Will flutter here, one there.

*Philip.* You say true, Madam.

*Mary.* The Holy Virgin will not have  
me yet

Lose the sweet hope that I may bear a  
prince.

If such a prince were born and you not  
here!

*Philip.* I should be here if such a  
prince were born.

*Mary.* But must you go?

*Philip.* Madam, you know my father,  
Retiring into cloistral solitude  
To yield the remnant of his years to  
heaven,  
Will shift the yoke and weight of all the  
world  
From off his neck to mine. We meet at  
Brussels.  
But since mine absence will not be for  
long,  
Your Majesty shall go to Dover with me,  
And wait my coming back.

*Mary.* To Dover? no,  
I am too feeble. I will go to Greenwich,  
So you will have me with you; and there  
watch  
All that is gracious in the breath of  
heaven

Draw with your sails from our poor land,  
and pass  
And leave me, Philip, with my prayers  
for you.

*Philip.* And doubtless I shall profit  
by your prayers.

*Mary.* Methinks that would you tarry  
one day more  
(The news was sudden) I could mould  
myself  
To bear your going better; will you do  
it?

*Philip.* Madam, a day may sink or  
save a realm.

*Mary.* A day may save a heart from  
breaking too.

*Philip.* Well, Simon Renard, shall we  
stop a day?

*Renard.* Your Grace's business will  
not suffer, sire,  
For one day more, so far as I can tell.

*Philip.* Then one day more to please  
her Majesty.

*Mary.* The sunshine sweeps across  
my life again.  
O if I knew you felt this parting, Philip,  
As I do!

*Philip.* By St. James I do protest,  
Upon the faith and honour of a Span-  
iard,

I am vastly grieved to leave your Majesty.  
Simon, is supper ready?

*Renard.* Ay, my liege,  
I saw the covers laying.

*Philip.* Let us have it. [*Exeunt.*]

## ACT IV.

## SCENE I.—A ROOM IN THE PALACE.

MARY, CARDINAL POLE.

*Mary.* What have you there?  
*Pole.* So please your Majesty,  
A long petition from the foreign exiles  
To spare the life of Cranmer. Bishop  
Thirlby,  
And my Lord Paget and Lord William  
Howard,  
Crave, in the same cause, hearing of your  
Grace.  
Hath he not written himself—infatu-  
ated—  
To sue you for his life?

*Mary.* His life? Oh, no;  
Not sued for that—he knows it were in  
vain.

But so much of the anti-papal leaven  
Works in him yet, he hath pray'd me not  
to sully

Mine own prerogative, and degrade the  
realm

By seeking justice at a stranger's hand  
Against my natural subject. King and  
Queen,

To whom he owes his loyalty after God,  
Shall these accuse him to a foreign  
prince?

Death would not grieve him more. I  
cannot be

True to this realm of England and the  
Pope

Together, says the heretic.

*Pole.* And there errs;  
As he hath ever err'd thro' vanity.

A secular kingdom is but as the body  
Lacking a soul; and in itself a beast.  
The Holy Father in a secular kingdom  
Is as the soul descending out of heaven  
Into a body generate.

*Mary.* Write to him, then.

*Pole.* I will.

*Mary.* And sharply, Pole.

*Pole.* Here come the Cranmerites!

*Enter* THIRLBY, LORD PAGET, LORD  
WILLIAM HOWARD.

*Howard.* Health to your Grace!  
Good morrow, my Lord Cardinal;



We make our humble prayer unto your  
Grace

That Cranmer may withdraw to foreign  
parts,

Or into private life within the realm.

In several bills and declarations, Madam,  
He hath recanted all his heresies.

*Paget.* Ay, ay; if Bonner have not  
forged the bills. [*Aside.*

*Mary.* Did not More die, and Fisher?  
he must burn.

*Howard.* He hath recanted, Madam.

*Mary.* The better for him.

He burns in Purgatory, not in Hell.

*Howard.* Ay, ay, your Grace; but it  
was never seen

That anyone recanting thus at full,  
As Cranmer hath, came to the fire on  
earth.

*Mary.* It will be seen now, then.

*Thirby.* O Madam, Madam!  
I thus implore you, low upon my knees,  
To reach the hand of mercy to my friend.  
I have err'd with him; with him I have  
recanted.

What human reason is there why my  
friend

Should meet with lesser mercy than my-  
self?

*Mary.* My Lord of Ely, this. After  
a riot

We hang the leaders, let their following  
go.

Cranmer is head and father of these here-  
sies,

New learning as they call it; yea, may  
God

Forget me at most need when I forget

Her foul divorce — my sainted mother —  
No! —

*Howard.* Ay, ay, but mighty doctors  
doubted there.

The Pope himself waver'd; and more  
than one

Row'd in that galley — Gardiner to wit,  
Whom truly I deny not to have been  
Your faithful friend and trusty councillor.  
Hath not your Highness ever read his  
book,

His tractate upon True Obedience,  
Writ by himself and Bonner?

*Mary.* I will take  
Such order with all bad, heretical books

That none shall hold them in his house  
and live,

Henceforward. No, my Lord.

*Howard.* Then never read it.

The truth is here. Your father was a man  
Of such colossal kinghood, yet so cour-  
teous,

Except when wroth, you scarce could  
meet his eye

And hold your own; and were he wroth  
indeed,

You held it less, or not at all. I say,  
Your father had a will that beat men down;  
Your father had a brain that beat men  
down —

*Pole.* Not me, my Lord.

*Howard.* No, for you were not here;  
You sit upon this fallen Cranmer's throne;  
And it would more become you, my Lord

Legate,

To join a voice, so potent with her High-  
ness,

To ours in plea for Cranmer than to stand  
On naked self-assertion.

*Mary.* All your voices

Are waves on flint. The heretic must  
burn.

*Howard.* Yet once he saved your  
Majesty's own life;

Stood out against the King in your be-  
half,

At his own peril.

*Mary.* I know not if he did;

And if he did I care not, my Lord  
Howard.

My life is not so happy, no such boon,  
That I should spare to take a heretic  
priest's,

Who saved it or not saved. Why do you  
vex me?

*Paget.* Yet to save Cranmer were to  
serve the Church,

Your Majesty's I mean; he is effaced,  
Self-blotted out; so wounded in his  
honour,

He can but creep down into some dark  
hole

Like a hurt beast, and hide himself and  
die;

But if you burn him, — well, your High-  
ness knows

The saying, 'Martyr's blood — seed of the  
Church.'

*Mary.* Of the true Church; but his  
is none, nor will be.

You are too politic for me, my Lord  
Paget.

And if he have to live so loath'd a life,  
It were more merciful to burn him now.

*Thirby.* Oh, yet relent. O Madam,  
if you knew him

As I do, ever gentle, and so gracious,  
With all his learning—

*Mary.* Yet a heretic still.  
His learning makes his burning the more  
just.

*Thirby.* So worshipt of all those that  
came across him;  
The stranger at his hearth, and all his  
house—

*Mary.* His children and his concu-  
bine, belike.

*Thirby.* To do him any wrong was  
to beget

A kindness from him, for his heart was  
rich,

Of such fine mould, that if you sow'd  
therein

The seed of Hate, it blossom'd Charity.

*Pole.* 'After his kind it costs him  
nothing,' there's

An old world English adage to the  
point.

These are but natural graces, my good  
Bishop,

Which in the Catholic garden are as  
flowers,

But on the heretic dunghill only weeds.

*Howard.* Such weeds make dunghills  
gracious.

*Mary.* Enough, my Lords.  
It is God's will, the Holy Father's will,

And Philip's will, and mine, that he  
should burn.

He is pronounced anathema.

*Howard.* Farewell, Madam,  
God grant you ampler mercy at your  
call

Than you have shown to Cranmer.

[*Exeunt* Lords.]

*Pole.* After this,  
Your Grace will hardly care to overlook

This same petition of the foreign exiles  
For Cranmer's life.

*Mary.* Make out the writ to-night.

[*Exeunt.*]

SCENE II. — OXFORD. CRANMER IN  
PRISON.

*Cranmer.* Last night, I dream'd the  
faggots were alight,  
And that myself was fasten'd to the stake,  
And found it all a visionary flame,  
Cool as the light in old decaying wood;  
And then King Harry look'd out from  
a cloud,

And bade me have good courage; and  
I heard

An angel cry, 'There is more joy' in  
Heaven,'—

And after that, the trumpet of the dead.  
[*Trumpets without.*]

Why, there are trumpets blowing now:  
what is it?

*Enter* FATHER COLE.

*Cole.* Cranmer, I come to question  
you again;

Have you remain'd in the true Catholic  
faith

I left you in?

*Cranmer.* In the true Catholic faith,  
By Heaven's grace, I am more and more  
confirm'd.

Why are the trumpets blowing, Father  
Cole?

*Cole.* Cranmer, it is decided by the  
Council

That you to-day should read your recan-  
tation

Before the people in St. Mary's Church.  
And there be many heretics in the town,

Who loathe you for your late return to  
Rome,

And might assail you passing through  
the street,

And tear you piecemeal: so you have  
a guard.

*Cranmer.* Or seek to rescue me. I  
thank the Council.

*Cole.* Do you lack any money?

*Cranmer.* Nay, why should I?  
The prison fare is good enough for me.

*Cole.* Ay, but to give the poor.

*Cranmer.* Hand it me, then!  
I thank you.

*Cole.* For a little space, farewell;  
Until I see you in St. Mary's Church.

[*Exit* Cole.]

*Cranmer.* It is against all precedent  
to burn  
One who recants; they mean to pardon  
me.  
To give the poor—they give the poor  
who die.  
Well, burn me or not burn me I am  
fixt;  
It is but a communion, not a mass:  
A holy supper, not a sacrifice;  
No man can make his Maker—Villa  
Garcia.

*Enter VILLA GARCIA.*

*Villa Garcia.* Pray you write out this  
paper for me, Cranmer.

*Cranmer.* Have I not writ enough  
to satisfy you?

*Villa Garcia.* It is the last.

*Cranmer.* Give it me, then.

[*He writes.*

*Villa Garcia.* Now sign.

*Cranmer.* I have sign'd enough, and  
I will sign no more.

*Villa Garcia.* It is no more than  
what you have sign'd already,

The public form thereof.

*Cranmer.* It may be so;

I sign it with my presence, if I read it.

*Villa Garcia.* But this is idle of you.

Well, sir, well,

You are to beg the people to pray for  
you;

Exhort them to a pure and virtuous  
life;

Declare the Queen's right to the throne;  
confess

Your faith before all hearers; and retract  
That Eucharistic doctrine in your book.

Will you not sign it now?

*Cranmer.* No, Villa Garcia,  
I sign no more. Will they have mercy  
on me?

*Villa Garcia.* Have you good hopes  
of mercy! So, farewell. [*Exit.*

*Cranmer.* Good hopes, not theirs,  
have I that I am fixt,

Fixt beyond fall; however, in strange  
hours,

After the long brain-dazing colloquies,  
And thousand-times recurring argument  
Of those two friars ever in my prison,  
When left alone in my despondency,

Without a friend, a book, my faith would  
seem

Dead or half-drown'd, or else swam  
heavily

Against the huge corruptions of the  
Church,

Monsters of mistradition, old enough  
To scare me into dreaming, 'what am I,  
Cranmer, against whole ages?' was it so,  
Or am I slandering my most inward friend,  
To veil the fault of my most outward  
foe—

The soft and tremulous coward in the  
flesh?

O higher, holier, earlier, purer church,  
I have found thee and not leave thee  
any more.

It is but a communion, not a mass—  
No sacrifice, but a life-giving feast!  
(*Writes.*) So, so; this will I say— thus  
will I pray. [*Puts up the paper.*

*Enter BONNER.*

*Bonner.* Good-day, old friend; what,  
you look somewhat worn;

And yet it is a day to test your health  
Ev'n at the best: I scarce have spoken  
with you

Since when?—your degradation. At  
your trial

Never stood up a bolder man than you;  
You would not cap the Pope's commis-  
sioner—

Your learning, and your stoutness, and  
your heresy,

Dumbfounded half of us. So, after that,  
We had to dis-archbishop and unlord,  
And make you simple Cranmer once  
again.

The common barber clipt your hair, and I  
Scraped from your finger-points the holy  
oil;

And worse than all, you had to kneel to  
*me*;

Which was not pleasant for you, Master  
Cranmer.

Now you, that would not recognise the  
Pope,

And you, that would not own the Real  
Presence,

Have found a real presence in the stake,  
Which frights you back into the ancient  
faith;

And so you have recanted to the Pope.  
How are the mighty fallen, Master  
Cranmer!

*Cranmer.* You have been more fierce  
against the Pope than I;  
But why fling back the stone he strikes  
me with? [*Aside.*

O Bonner, if I ever did you kindness—  
Power hath been given you to try faith  
by fire—

Pray you, remembering how yourself have  
changed,

Be somewhat pitiful, after I have gone,  
To the poor flock—to women and to  
children—

That when I was archbishop held with  
me.

*Bonner.* Ay—gentle as they call you  
—live or die!

Pitiful to this pitiful heresy?

I must obey the Queen and Council, man.  
Win thro' this day with honour to your-  
self,

And I'll say something for you—so—  
good-bye. [*Exit.*

*Cranmer.* This hard coarse man of  
old hath crouch'd to me

Till I myself was half ashamed for him.

*Enter THIRLBY.*

Weep not, good Thirlby.

*Thirlby.* O my Lord, my Lord!  
My heart is no such block as Bonner's is:  
Who would not weep?

*Cranmer.* Why do you so my-lord me,  
Who am disgraced?

*Thirlby.* On earth; but saved in  
heaven

By your recanting.

*Cranmer.* Will they burn me,  
Thirlby?

*Thirlby.* Alas, they will; these burn-  
ings will not help

The purpose of the faith; but my poor  
voice

Against them is a whisper to the roar  
Of a spring-tide.

*Cranmer.* And they will surely  
burn me?

*Thirlby.* Ay; and besides, will have  
you in the church

Repeat your recantation in the ears

Of all men, to the saving of their souls,  
Before your execution. May God help  
you

Thro' that hard hour!

*Cranmer.* And may God bless you,  
Thirlby!

Well, they shall hear my recantation  
there.

[*Exit Thirlby.*

Disgraced, dishonour'd!—not by them,  
indeed,

By mine own self—by mine own hand!  
O thin-skinn'd hand and jutting veins,  
'twas you

That sign'd the burning of poor Joan of  
Kent;

But then she was a witch. You have  
written much,

But you were never raised to plead for  
Frith,

Whose dogmas I have reach'd: he was  
deliver'd

To the secular arm to burn; and there  
was Lambert;

Who can foresee himself? truly these  
burnings,

As Thirlby says, are profitless to the  
burners,

And help the other side. You shall burn  
too,

Burn first when I am burnt.

Fire—inch by inch to die in agony!  
Latimer

Had a brief end—not Ridley. Hooper  
burn'd

Three-quarters of an hour. Will my  
faggots

Be wet as his were? It is a day of rain.  
I will not muse upon it.

My fancy takes the burner's part, and  
makes

The fire seem even crueller than it is.

No, I doubt not that God will give me  
strength,

Albeit I have denied him.

*Enter SOTO and VILLA GARCIA.*

*Villa Garcia.* We are ready  
To take you to St. Mary's, Master  
Cranmer.

*Cranmer.* And I: lead on; ye loose  
me from my bonds. [*Exeunt.*

## SCENE III.—ST. MARY'S CHURCH.

COLE *in the Pulpit*, LORD WILLIAMS OF THAME *presiding*. LORD WILLIAM HOWARD, LORD PAGET, *and others*. CRANMER *enters between SOTO and VILLA GARCIA, and the whole Choir strike up 'Nunc Dimittis.'* CRANMER *is set upon a scaffold before the people.*

*Cole.* Behold him.—

[*A pause: people in the foreground.*  
*People.* Oh, unhappy sight!

*First Protestant.* See how the tears run down his fatherly face.

*Second Protestant.* James, didst thou ever see a carrion crow

Stand watching a sick beast before he dies?

*First Protestant.* Him perch'd up there? I wish some thunderbolt Would make this Cole a cinder, pulpit and all.

*Cole.* Behold him, brethren: he hath cause to weep!—

So have we all: weep with him if ye will, Yet—

It is expedient for one man to die,  
Yea, for the people, lest the people die.  
Yet wherefore should he die that hath return'd

To the one Catholic Universal Church,  
Repentant of his errors?

*Protestant murmurs.* Ay, tell us that.

*Cole.* Those of the wrong side will despise the man,

Deeming him one that thro' the fear of death

Gave up his cause, except he seal his faith  
In sight of all with flaming martyrdom.

*Cranmer.* Ay.

*Cole.* Ye hear him, and albeit there may seem

According to the canons pardon due  
To him that so repents, yet are there causes

Wherefore our Queen and Council at this time

Adjudge him to the death. He hath been a traitor,

A shaker and confounder of the realm;  
And when the King's divorce was sued at Rome,

He here, this heretic metropolitan,  
As if he had been the Holy Father, sat  
And judg'd it. Did I call him heretic?  
A huge heresiarch! never was it known  
That any man so writing, preaching so,  
So poisoning the Church, so long continuing,  
Hath found his pardon; therefore he must die,  
For warning and example.

Other reasons  
There be for this man's ending, which our Queen  
And Council at this present deem it not  
Expedient to be known.

*Protestant murmurs.* I warrant you.

*Cole.* Take therefore, all, example by this man,

For if our Holy Queen not pardon him,  
Much less shall others in like cause escape,

That all of you, the highest as the lowest,

May learn there is no power against the Lord.

There stands a man, once of so high degree,

Chief prelate of our Church, archbishop, first

In Council, second person in the realm,  
Friend for so long time of a mighty King:  
And now ye see downfallen and debased  
From councillor to caitiff—fallen so low,  
The leprous flutterings of the byway, scum  
And offal of the city, would not change  
Estates with him; in brief, so miserable,  
There is no hope of better left for him,  
No place for worse.

Yet, Cranmer, be thou glad.  
This is the work of God. He is glorified  
In thy conversion: lo! thou art reclaim'd;  
He brings thee home: nor fear but that to-day

Thou shalt receive the penitent thief's award,

And be with Christ the Lord in Paradise.  
Remember how God made the fierce fire seem

To those three children like a pleasant dew.

Remember, too,  
The triumph of St. Andrew on his cross,  
The patience of St. Lawrence in the fire.

Thus, if thou call on God and all the saints,

God will beat down the fury of the flame,  
Or give thee saintly strength to undergo.  
And for thy soul shall masses here be sung  
By every priest in Oxford. Pray for him.

*Cranmer.* Ay, one and all, dear brothers, pray for me;

Pray with one breath, one heart, one soul for me.

*Cole.* And now, lest anyone among you doubt

The man's conversion and remorse of heart,

Yourselves shall hear him speak. Speak, Master Cranmer,

Fulfil your promise made me, and proclaim

Your true undoubted faith, that all may hear.

*Cranmer.* And that I will. O God, Father of Heaven!

O Son of God, Redeemer of the world!

O Holy Ghost! proceeding from them both,

Three persons and one God, have mercy on me,

Most miserable sinner, wretched man.

I have offended against heaven and earth  
More grievously than any tongue can tell.

Then whither should I flee for any help?  
I am ashamed to lift mine eyes to heaven,

And I can find no refuge upon earth.

Shall I despair then?—God forbid! O God,

For thou art merciful, refusing none

That come to Thee for succour, unto Thee,

Therefore, I come; humble myself to Thee;

Saying, O Lord God, although my sins be great,

For thy great mercy have mercy! O God the Son,

Not for slight faults alone, when thou becamest

Man in the Flesh, was the great mystery wrought;

O God the Father, not for little sins

Didst thou yield up thy Son to human death;

But for the greatest sin that can be sinn'd,  
Yea, even such as mine, incalculable,

Unpardonable,—sin against the light,  
The truth of God, which I had proven and known.

Thy mercy must be greater than all sin.  
Forgive me, Father, for no merit of mine,  
But that Thy name by man be glorified,  
And Thy most blessed Son's, who died for man.

Good people, every man at time of death

Would fain set forth some saying that may live

After his death and better humankind;  
For death gives life's last word a power

to live,  
And, like the stone-cut epitaph, remain

After the vanish'd voice, and speak to men.

God grant me grace to glorify my God!

And first I say it is a grievous case,  
Many so dote upon this bubble world,

Whose colours in a moment break and fly,

They care for nothing else. What saith St. John:—

'Love of this world is hatred against God.'

Again, I pray you all that, next to God,  
You do un murmuringly and willingly

Obey your King and Queen, and not for dread

Of these alone, but from the fear of Him

Whose ministers they be to govern you.

Thirdly, I pray you all to live together  
Like brethren; yet what hatred Christian

men

Bear to each other, seeming not as brethren,

But mortal foes! But do you good to all  
As much as in you lieth. Hurt no man

more  
Than you would harm your loving natural brother

Of the same roof, same breast. If any do,  
Albeit he think himself at home with

God,

Of this be sure, he is whole worlds away.

*Protestant murmurs.* What sort of brothers then be those that lust

To burn each other?

*Williams.* Peace among you, there!



*Cranmer.* Fourthly, to those that own exceeding wealth,  
Remember that sore saying spoken once  
By Him that was the truth, 'How hard  
it is

For the rich man to enter into Heaven;'  
Let all rich men remember that hard word.  
I have not time for more: if ever, now  
Let them flow forth in charity, seeing now  
The poor so many, and all food so dear.  
Long have I lain in prison, yet have  
heard  
Of all their wretchedness. Give to the  
poor,

Ye give to God. He is with us in the  
poor.

And now, and forasmuch as I have  
come

To the last end of life, and thereupon  
Hangs all my past, and all my life to be,  
Either to live with Christ in heaven with  
joy,

Or to be still in pain with devils in hell;  
And, seeing in a moment, I shall find

[*Pointing upwards.*

Heaven or else hell ready to swallow me,  
[*Pointing downwards.*

I shall declare to you my very faith

Without all colour.

*Cole.* Hear him, my good brethren.

*Cranmer.* I do believe in God, Father  
of all;

In every article of the Catholic faith,  
And every syllable taught us by our Lord,  
His prophets, and apostles, in the Testa-  
ments,

Both Old and New.

*Cole.* Be plainer, Master Cranmer.

*Cranmer.* And now I come to the  
great cause that weighs

Upon my conscience more than anything  
Or said or done in all my life by me;  
For there be writings I have set abroad  
Against the truth I knew within my heart,  
Written for fear of death, to save my life,  
If that might be; the papers by my hand  
Sign'd since my degradation—by this  
hand

[*Holding out his right hand.*

Written and sign'd—I here renounce  
them all;

And, since my hand offended, having  
written

Against my heart, my hand shall first be  
burnt,

So I may come to the fire.

[*Dead silence.*

*Protestant murmurs.*

*First Protestant.* I knew it would be  
so.

*Second Protestant.* Our prayers are  
heard!

*Third Protestant.* God bless him!

*Catholic murmurs.* Out upon him!  
out upon him!

Liar! dissembler! traitor! to the fire!

*Williams (raising his voice).* You  
know that you recanted all you  
said

Touching the sacrament in that same  
book

You wrote against my Lord of Winches-  
ter;

Dissemble not; play the plain Christian  
man.

*Cranmer.* Alas, my Lord,

I have been a man loved plainness all my  
life;

I *did* dissemble, but the hour has come  
For utter truth and plainness; wherefore,

I say,

I hold by all I wrote within that book.

Moreover,

As for the Pope I count him Antichrist,  
With all his devil's doctrines; and refuse,  
Reject him, and abhor him. I have said.

[*Cries on all sides, 'Pull him down!  
Away with him!'*

*Cole.* Ay, stop the heretic's mouth!  
Hale him away!

*Williams.* Harm him not, harm him  
not! have him to the fire!

[*CRANMER goes out between Two  
Friars, smiling; hands are reached  
to him from the crowd. LORD  
WILLIAM HOWARD and LORD  
PAGET are left alone in the church.*

*Page.* The nave and aisles all empty  
as a fool's jest!

No, here's Lord William Howard. What,  
my Lord,

You have not gone to see the burning?

*Howard.*

Fie!

To stand at ease, and stare as at a show,  
And watch a good man burn! Never  
again.

I saw the deaths of Latimer and Ridley.  
Moreover, tho' a Catholic, I would not,  
For the pure honour of our common  
nature,

Hear what I might — another recantation

Of Cranmer at the stake.

*Paget.* You'd not hear that.  
He pass'd out smiling, and he walk'd  
upright;

His eye was like a soldier's, whom the  
general

He looks to and he leans on as his God,  
Hath rated for some backwardness and  
bidd'n him

Charge one against a thousand, and the  
man

Hurls his soil'd life against the pikes  
and dies.

*Howard.* Yet that he might not after  
all those papers

Of recantation yield again, who knows?

*Paget.* Papers of recantation! Think  
you then

That Cranmer read all papers that he  
sign'd?

Or sign'd all those they tell us that he  
sign'd?

Nay, I trow not: and you shall see, my  
Lord,

That howsoever hero-like the man  
Dies in the fire, this Bonner or another  
Will in some lying fashion misreport  
His ending to the glory of their church.  
And you saw Latimer and Ridley die?  
Latimer was eighty, was he not? his best  
Of life was over then.

*Howard.* His eighty years  
Look'd somewhat crooked on him in his  
frieze;

But after they had stript him to his  
shroud,

He stood upright, a lad of twenty-one,  
And gather'd with his hands the starting  
flame,

And wash'd his hands and all his face  
therein,

Until the powder suddenly blew him  
dead.

Ridley was longer burning; but he died  
As manfully and boldly, and, 'fore God,  
I know them heretics, but right English  
ones.

If ever, as heaven grant, we clash with  
Spain,

Our Ridley-soldiers and our Latimer-  
sailors

Will teach her something.

*Paget.* Your mild Legate Pole  
Will tell you that the devil helpt them  
thro' it.

[*A murmur of the crowd in the dis-  
tance.*]

Hark, how those Roman wolfdogs howl  
and bay him!

*Howard.* Might it not be the other  
side rejoicing

In his brave end?

*Paget.* They are too crush'd,  
too broken,

They can but weep in silence.

*Howard.* Ay, ay, *Paget*,  
They have brought it in large measure  
on themselves.

Have I not heard them mock the blessed  
Host

In songs so lewd, the beast might roar  
his claim

To being in God's image, more than  
they?

Have I not seen the gamekeeper, the  
groom,

Gardener, and huntsman, in the parson's  
place,

The parson from his own spire swung  
out dead,

And Ignorance crying in the streets, and  
all men

Regarding her? I say they have drawn  
the fire

On their own heads: yet, *Paget*, I do  
hold

The Catholic, if he have the greater  
right,

Hath been the crueller.

*Paget.* Action and re-action,  
The miserable see-saw of our child-world,

Make us despise it at odd hours, my  
Lord.

Heaven help that this re-action not re-  
act

Yet fiercelier under Queen Elizabeth,

So that she come to rule us.

*Howard.* The world's mad.

*Paget.* My Lord, the world is like a  
drunken man,

Who cannot move straight to his end —  
but reels

Now to the right, then as far to the left,  
Push'd by the crowd beside — and under-  
foot

An earthquake; for since Henry for a  
doubt —

Which a young lust had clapt upon the  
back,

Crying, 'Forward!' — set our old church  
rocking, men

Have hardly known what to believe, or  
whether

They should believe in anything; the  
currents

So shift and change, they see not how  
they are borne,

Nor whither. I conclude the King a  
beast;

Verily a lion if you will — the world  
A most obedient beast and fool — myself

Half beast and fool as appertaining to it;  
Altho' your Lordship hath as little of  
each

Cleaving to your original Adam-clay,  
As may be consonant with mortality.

*Howard.* We talk and Cranmer  
suffers.

The kindest man I ever knew; see, see,  
I speak of him in the past. Unhappy  
land!

Hard-natured Queen, half-Spanish in  
herself,

And grafted on the hard-grain'd stock of  
Spain —

Her life, since Philip left her, and she  
lost

Her fierce desire of bearing him a child,  
Hath, like a brief and bitter winter's day,  
Gone narrowing down and darkening to  
a close.

There will be more conspiracies, I fear.

*Paget.* Ay, ay, beware of France.

*Howard.* O Paget, Paget,  
I have seen heretics of the poorer sort,  
Expectant of the rack from day to day,  
To whom the fire were welcome, lying  
chain'd

In breathless dungeons over steaming  
sewers,

Fed with rank bread that crawl'd upon  
the tongue,

And putrid water, every drop a worm,

Until they died of rotted limbs; and  
then

Cast on the dunghill naked, and become  
Hideously alive again from head to heel,  
Made even the carrion-nosing mongrel  
vomit

With hate and horror.

*Paget.* Nay, you sicken *me*  
To hear you.

*Howard.* Fancy-sick; these things  
are done,

Done right against the promise of this  
Queen

Twice given.

*Paget.* No faith with heretics, my  
Lord!

Hist! there be two old gossips — gospel-  
lers,

I take it; stand behind the pillar here;  
I warrant you they talk about the burn-  
ing.

*Enter* TWO OLD WOMEN. JOAN, and  
*after her* TIB.

*Joan.* Why, it be Tib!

*Tib.* I cum behind tha, gall, and  
couldn't make tha hear. Eh, the wind  
and the wet! What a day, what a day!  
nigh upo' judgment daay loike. Pwoaps  
be pretty things, Joan, but they wunt set  
i' the Lord's cheer o' that daay.

*Joan.* I must set down myself, Tib; it  
be a var waay vor my owld legs up vro'  
Islip. Eh, my rheumatizy be that bad  
howiver be I to win to the burnin'.

*Tib.* I should saay 'twur ower by  
now. I'd ha' been here avore, but  
Dumble wur blow'd wi' the wind, and  
Dumble's the best milcher in Islip.

*Joan.* Our Daisy's as good 'z her.

*Tib.* Noa, Joan.

*Joan.* Our Daisy's butter's as good 'z  
hern.

*Tib.* Noa, Joan.

*Joan.* Our Daisy's cheeses be better.

*Tib.* Noa, Joan.

*Joan.* Eh, then ha' thy waay wi' me,  
Tib; ez thou hast wi' thy owld man.

*Tib.* Ay, Joan, and my owld man  
wur up and awaay betimes wi' dree hard  
eggs for a good plect at the burnin';  
and harrin' the wet, Hodge 'ud ha' been  
a-harrowin' o' white peasen i' the outfield

—and barrin' the wind, Dumble wur blow'd wi' the wind, so 'z we was forced to stick her, but we fetched her round at last. Thank the Lord therevore. Dumble's the best milcher in Islip.

*Joan.* Thou's thy way wi' man and beast, Tib. I wonder at tha', it beats me! Eh, but I do know ez Pwoaps and vires be bad things; tell 'ee now, I heerd summat as sumnun towld summun o' owld Bishop Gardiner's end; there wur an owld lord a-cum to dine wi' un, and a wur so owld a couldn't hide vor his dinner, but a had to bide howsomiver, vor 'I wunt dine,' says my Lord Bishop, says he, 'not till I hears ez Latimer and Ridley be a-vire;' and so they bided on and on till vour o' the clock, till his man cum in post vro' here, and tells un ez the vire has tuk holt. 'Now,' says the Bishop, says he, 'we'll gwo to dinner;' and the owld lord fell to 's meat wi' a will, God bless un! but Gardiner wur struck down like by the hand o' God avore a could taste a mossel, and a set un all a-vire, so 'z the tongue on un cum a-lolluping out o' 'is mouth as black as a rat. Thank the Lord, therevore.

*Paget.* The fools!

*Tib.* Ay, Joan; and Queen Mary gwoes on a-burnin' and a-burnin', to get her baaby born; but all her burnin's 'ill never burn out the hypocrisy that makes the water in her. There's nought but the vire of God's hell ez can burn out that.

*Joan.* Thank the Lord, therevore.

*Paget.* The fools!

*Tib.* A-burnin', and a-burnin', and a-makin' o' volk madder and madder; but tek thou my word vor't, Joan,—and I bean't wrong not twice i' ten year—the burnin' o' the owld archbishop 'ill burn the Pwoap out o' this 'ere land vor iver and iver.

*Howard.* Out of the church, you brace of cursed crones,  
Or I will have you duck'd! (*Women hurry out.*) Said I not right?  
For how should reverend prelate or throned prince  
Brook for an hour such brute malignity?  
Ah, what an acrid wine has Luther brew'd!

*Paget.* Pooh, pooh, my Lord! poot garrulous country-wives.

Buy you their cheeses, and they'll side with you;

You cannot judge the liquor from the lees.

*Howard.* I think that in some sort we may. But see,

*Enter PETERS.*

Peters, my gentleman, an honest Catholic, Who follow'd with the crowd to Cranmer's fire.

One that would neither misreport nor lie, Not to gain Paradise: no, nor if the Pope, Charged him to do it—he is white as death. Peters, how pale you look! you bring the smoke

Of Cranmer's burning with you.

*Peters.* Twice or thrice The smoke of Cranmer's burning wrapt me round.

*Howard.* Peters, you knōw me Catholic, but English.

Did he die bravely? Tell me that, or leave All else untold.

*Peters.* My Lord, he died most bravely.

*Howard.* Then tell me all.

*Paget.* Ay, Master Peters, tell us.

*Peters.* You saw him how he past among the crowd;

And ever as he walk'd the Spanish friars Still plied him with entreaty and reproach: But Cranmer, as the helmsman at the helm Steers, ever looking to the happy haven Where he shall rest at night, moved to his death;

And I could see that many silent hands Came from the crowd and met his own; and thus,

When we had come where Ridley burnt with Latimer,

He, with a cheerful smile, as one whose mind

Is all made up, in haste put off the rags They had mock'd his misery with, and all in white,

His long white beard, which he had never shaven

Since Henry's death, down-sweeping to the chain,

Wherewith they bound him to the stake, he stood

More like an ancient father of the Church,  
Than heretic of these times; and still  
the friars

Plied him, but Cranmer only shook his  
head,

Or answer'd them in smiling negatives;  
Whereat Lord Williams gave a sudden  
cry:—

'Make short! make short!' and so they  
lit the wood.

Then Cranmer lifted his left hand to  
heaven,

And thrust his right into the bitter flame;  
And crying, in his deep voice, more than  
once,

'This hath offended—this unworthy  
hand!'

So held it till it all was burn'd, before  
The flame had reach'd his body; I stood  
near—

Mark'd him—he never uttered moan of  
pain:

He never stirr'd or writhed, but, like a  
statue,

Unmoving in the greatness of the flame,  
Gave up the ghost; and so past martyr-  
like—

Martyr I may not call him—past—but  
whither?

*Paget.* To purgatory, man, to purga-  
tory.

*Peters.* Nay, but, my Lord, he denied  
purgatory.

*Paget.* Why then to heaven, and God  
ha' mercy on him.

*Howard.* Paget, despite his fearful  
heresies,

I loved the man, and needs must moan  
for him;

O Cranmer!

*Paget.* But your moan is useless now:  
Come out, my Lord, it is a world of fools.

[*Excunt.*]

## ACT V.

SCENE I.—LONDON. HALL IN THE  
PALACE.

QUEEN, SIR NICHOLAS HEATH.

*Heath.* Madam,  
I do assure you, that it must be look'd  
to:

Calais is but ill-garrison'd, in Guisnes  
Are scarce two hundred men, and the  
French fleet

Rule in the narrow seas. It must be  
look'd to,

If war should fall between yourself and  
France;

Or you will lose your Calais.

*Mary.* It shall be look'd to;  
I wish you a good morning, good Sir

Nicholas:  
Here is the King. [*Exit Heath.*]

*Enter PHILIP.*

*Philip.* Sir Nicholas tells you true,  
And you must look to Calais when I go.

*Mary.* Go? must you go, indeed—  
again—so soon?

Why, nature's licensed vagabond, the  
swallow,

That might live always in the sun's warm  
heart,

Stays longer here in our poor north than  
you:—

Knows where he nested—ever comes  
again.

*Philip.* And, Madam, so shall I.

*Mary.* Oh, will you? will you?  
I am faint with fear that you will come  
no more.

*Philip.* Ay, ay; but many voices call  
me hence.

*Mary.* Voices—I hear unhappy ru-  
mours—nay,

I say not, I believe. What voices call  
you

Dearer than mine that should be dearest  
to you?

Alas, my Lord! what voices and how  
many?

*Philip.* The voices of Castille and  
Aragon,

Granada, Naples, Sicily, and Milan,—  
The voices of Franche-Comté, and the  
Netherlands,

The voices of Peru and Mexico,  
Tunis, and Oran, and the Philippines,  
And all the fair spice-islands of the East.

*Mary (admiringly).* You are the  
mightiest monarch upon earth,  
I but a little Queen: and so, indeed,  
Need you the more.

*Philip.* A little Queen! but when

I came to wed your majesty, Lord Howard,  
Sending an insolent shot that dash'd the  
seas

Upon us, made us lower our kingly flag  
To yours of England.

*Mary.* Howard is all English!  
There is no king, not were he ten times  
king,

Ten times our husband, but must lower  
his flag  
To that of England in the seas of Eng-  
land.

*Philip.* Is that your answer?

*Mary.* Being Queen of England,  
I have none other.

*Philip.* So.

*Mary.* But wherefore not  
Helm the huge vessel of your state, my  
liege,

Here by the side of her who loves you  
most?

*Philip.* No, Madam, no! a candle in  
the sun

Is all but smoke — a star beside the moon  
Is all but lost; your people will not  
crown me —

Your people are as cheerless as your  
climate;

Hate me and mine: witness the brawls,  
the gibbets.

Here swings a Spaniard — there an Eng-  
lishman;

The peoples are unlike as their com-  
plexion;

Yet will I be your swallow and return —  
But now I cannot bide.

*Mary.* Not to help *me*?

They hate *me* also for my love to you,  
My Philip; and these judgments on the  
land —

Harvestless autumns, horrible agues,  
plague —

*Philip.* The blood and sweat of here-  
tics at the stake

Is God's best dew upon the barren field.  
Burn more!

*Mary.* I will, I will; and you will stay?

*Philip.* Have I not said? Madam, I  
came to sue

Your Council and yourself to declare war.

*Mary.* Sir, there are many English in  
your ranks

To help your battle.

*Philip.* So far, good. I say  
I came to sue your Council and yourself  
To declare war against the King of  
France.

*Mary.* Not to see me?

*Philip.* Ay, Madam, to see you.  
Unalterably and pesteringly fond! [*Aside.*  
But, soon or late you must have war with  
France;

King Henry warms your traitors at his  
hearth.

Carew is there, and Thomas Stafford  
there.

Courtenay, belike —

*Mary.* A fool and featherhead!

*Philip.* Ay, but they use his name.  
In brief, this Henry

Stirs up your land against you to the in-  
tent

That you may lose your English heritage.  
And then, your Scottish namesake mar-  
rying

The Dauphin, he would weld France,  
England, Scotland,

Into one sword to hack at Spain and me.

*Mary.* And yet the Pope is now col-  
leagued with France;

You make your wars upon him down in  
Italy: —

Philip, can that be well?

*Philip.* Content you, Madam;  
You must abide my judgment, and my  
father's,

Who deems it a most just and holy war.  
The Pope would cast the Spaniard out  
of Naples:

He calls us worse than Jews, Moors,  
Saracens.

The Pope has pushed his horns beyond  
his mitre —

Beyond his province. Now,  
Duke Alva will but touch him on the  
horns,

And he withdraws; and of his holy  
head —

For Alva is true son of the true church —  
No hair is harm'd. Will you not help me  
here?

*Mary.* Alas! the Council will not  
hear of war.

They say your wars are not the wars of  
England.

They will not lay more taxes on a land



So hunger-nipt and wretched; and you  
 know  
 The crown is poor. We have given the  
 church-lands back:  
 The nobles would not; nay, they clapt  
 their hands  
 Upon their swords when ask'd; and  
 therefore God  
 Is hard upon the people. What's to be  
 done?  
 Sir, I will move them in your cause  
 again,  
 And we will raise us loans and subsidies  
 Among the merchants; and Sir Thomas  
 Gresham  
 Will aid us. There is Antwerp and the  
 Jews.  
*Philip.* Madam, my thanks.  
*Mary.* And you will stay your  
 going?  
*Philip.* And further to discourage and  
 lay lame  
 The plots of France, altho' you love her  
 not,  
 You must proclaim Elizabeth your heir.  
 She stands between you and the Queen  
 of Scots.  
*Mary.* The Queen of Scots at least is  
 Catholic.  
*Philip.* Ay, Madam, Catholic; but I  
 will not have  
 The King of France the King of England  
 too.  
*Mary.* But she's a heretic, and, when  
 I am gone,  
 Brings the new learning back.  
*Philip.* It must be done.  
 You must proclaim Elizabeth your heir.  
*Mary.* Then it is done; but you will  
 stay your going  
 Somewhat beyond your settled purpose?  
*Philip.* No!  
*Mary.* What, not one day?  
*Philip.* You beat upon the rock.  
*Mary.* And I am broken there.  
*Philip.* Is this a place  
 To wail in, Madam? what! a public hall.  
 Go in, I pray you.  
*Mary.* Do not seem so changed.  
 Say go; but only say it lovingly.  
*Philip.* You do mistake. I am not  
 one to change.  
 I never loved you more.

*Mary.* Sire, I obey you.  
 Come quickly.

*Philip.* Ay. [*Exit Mary.*]

*Enter COUNT DE FERIA.*

*Feria (aside).* The Queen in tears!

*Philip.* Feria!

Hast thou not mark'd—come closer to  
 mine ear—

How doubly aged this Queen of ours hath  
 grown

Since she lost hope of bearing us a  
 child?

*Feria.* Sire, if your Grace hath mark'd  
 it, so have I.

*Philip.* Hast thou not likewise mark'd  
 Elizabeth,

How fair and royal—like a Queen,  
 indeed?

*Feria.* Allow me the same answer as  
 before—

That if your Grace hath mark'd her, so  
 have I.

*Philip.* Good, now; methinks my  
 Queen is like enough

To leave me by and by.

*Feria.* To leave you, sire?

*Philip.* I mean not like to live.  
 Elizabeth—

To Philibert of Savoy, as you know,  
 We meant to wed her; but I am not  
 sure

She will not serve me better—so my  
 Queen

Would leave me—as—my wife.

*Feria.* Sire, even so.

*Philip.* She will not have Prince  
 Philibert of Savoy.

*Feria.* No, sire.

*Philip.* I have to pray you, some  
 odd time,

To sound the Princess carelessly on this;  
 Not as from me, but as your phantasy;

And tell me how she takes it.

*Feria.* Sire, I will.

*Philip.* I am not certain but that  
 Philibert

Shall be the man; and I shall urge his  
 suit

Upon the Queen, because I am not cer-  
 tain:

You understand, Feria?

*Feria.* Sire, I do.

*Philip.* And if you be not secret in this matter,  
You understand me there, too?

*Feria.* Sire, I do.

*Philip.* You must be sweet and supple,  
like a Frenchman.

She is none of those who loathe the  
honeycomb. [*Exit Feria.*]

*Enter RENARD.*

*Renard.* My liege, I bring you goodly  
tidings.

*Philip.* Well?

*Renard.* There will be war with  
France, at last, my liege;  
Sir Thomas Stafford, a bull-headed ass,  
Sailing from France, with thirty English-  
men,  
Hath taken Scarboro' Castle, north of  
York;

Proclaims himself protector, and affirms  
The Queen has forfeited her right to reign  
By marriage with an alien—other things  
As idle; a weak Wyatt! Little doubt  
This buzz will soon be silenced; but the  
Council

(I have talk'd with some already) are  
for war.

This is the fifth conspiracy hatch'd in  
France;

They show their teeth upon it; and your  
Grace,

So you will take advice of mine, should stay  
Yet for awhile, to shape and guide the  
event.

*Philip.* Good! Renard, I will stay  
then.

*Renard.* Also, sire,  
Might I not say—to please your wife,  
the Queen?

*Philip.* Ay, Renard, if you care to  
put it so. [*Exeunt.*]

SCENE II.—A ROOM IN THE  
PALACE.

MARY, *sitting: a rose in her hand.*

LADY CLARENCE. ALICE *in the back-  
ground.*

*Mary.* Look! I have play'd with this  
poor rose so long  
I have broken off the head.

*Lady Clarence.* Your Grace hath been  
More merciful to many a rebel head  
That should have fallen, and may rise  
again.

*Mary.* There were not many hang'd  
for Wyatt's rising.

*Lady Clarence.* Nay, not two hundred.

*Mary.* I could weep for them  
And her, and mine own self and all the  
world.

*Lady Clarence.* For her? for whom,  
your Grace?

*Enter USHER.*

*Usher.* The Cardinal.

*Enter CARDINAL POLE. (MARY rises.)*

*Mary.* Reginald Pole, what news hath  
plagued thy heart?  
What makes thy favour like the bloodless  
head

Fall'n on the block, and held up by the  
hair?

*Philip?*—

*Pole.* No, Philip is as warm in life  
As ever.

*Mary.* Ay, and then as cold as ever.  
Is Calais taken?

*Pole.* Cousin, there hath chanced  
A sharper harm to England and to Rome,  
Than Calais taken. Julius the Third  
Was ever just, and mild, and father-like;  
But this new Pope Caraffa, Paul the  
Fourth,

Not only reft me of that legateship  
Which Julius gave me, and the legateship  
Annex'd to Canterbury—nay, but worse—  
And yet I must obey the Holy Father,  
And so must you, good cousin;—worse  
than all,

A passing bell toll'd in a dying ear—  
He hath cited me to Rome, for heresy,  
Before his Inquisition.

*Mary.* I knew it, cousin,  
But held from you all papers sent by  
Rome,

That you might rest among us, till the  
Pope,

To compass which I wrote myself to  
Rome,

Reversed his doom, and that you might  
not seem

To disobey his Holiness.

*Pole.* He hates Philip;  
 He is all Italian, and he hates the  
 Spaniard;  
 He cannot dream that *I* advised the  
 war;  
 He strikes thro' me at Philip and your-  
 self.  
 Nay, but I know it of old, he hates me  
 too;  
 So brands me in the stare of Christendom  
 A heretic!  
 Now, even now, when bow'd before my  
 time,  
 The house half-ruin'd ere the lease be  
 out;  
 When I should guide the Church in peace  
 at home,  
 After my twenty years of banishment,  
 And all my lifelong labour to uphold  
 The primacy—a heretic. Long ago,  
 When I was ruler in the patrimony,  
 I was too lenient to the Lutheran,  
 And I and learned friends among our-  
 selves  
 Would freely canvass certain Lutheran-  
 isms.  
 What then, he knew I was no Lutheran.  
 A heretic!  
 He drew this shaft against me to the  
 head,  
 When it was thought I might be chosen  
 Pope,  
 But then withdrew it. In full consis-  
 tory,  
 When I was made Archbishop, he  
 approved me.  
 And how should he have sent me Legate  
 hither,  
 Deeming me heretic? and what heresy  
 since?  
 But he was evermore mine enemy,  
 And hates the Spaniard—fiery-choleric,  
 A drinker of black, strong, volcanic  
 wines,  
 That ever make him fierier. I, a heretic?  
 Your Highness knows that in pursuing  
 heresy  
 I have gone beyond your late Lord  
 Chancellor,—  
 He cried Enough! enough! before his  
 death.—  
 Gone beyond him and mine own natural  
 man

(It was God's cause); so far they call  
 me now,

The scourge and butcher of their English  
 church.

*Mary.* Have courage, your reward is  
 Heaven itself.

*Pole.* They groan amen; they swarm  
 into the fire  
 Like flies—for what? no dogma. They  
 know nothing;

They burn for nothing.

*Mary.* You have done your best.

*Pole.* Have done my best, and as a  
 faithful son,  
 That all day long hath wrought his father's  
 work,

When back he comes at evening hath the  
 door

Shut on him by the father whom he  
 loved,

His early follies cast into his teeth,  
 And the poor son turn'd out into the  
 street

To sleep, to die—I shall die of it,  
 cousin.

*Mary.* I pray you be not so dis-  
 console;

I still will do mine utmost with the Pope.  
 Poor cousin!

Have not I been the fast friend of your  
 life

Since mine began, and it was thought we  
 two

Might make one flesh, and cleave unto  
 each other

As man and wife?

*Pole.* Ah, cousin, I remember  
 How I would dandle you upon my knee  
 At lisping-age. I watch'd you dancing  
 once

With your huge father; he look'd the  
 Great Harry,

You but his cockboat; prettily you  
 did it,

And innocently. No—we were not made  
 One flesh in happiness, no happiness  
 here;

But now we are made one flesh in  
 misery;

Our bridemaids are not lovely—Dis-  
 appointment,

Ingratitude, Injustice, Evil-tongue,  
 Labour-in-vain,

*Mary.* Surely, not all in vain.  
Peace, cousin, peace! I am sad at heart  
myself.

*Pole.* Our altar is a mound of dead  
men's clay,  
Dug from the grave that yawns for us  
beyond;  
And there is one Death stands behind  
the Groom,  
And there is one Death stands behind  
the Bride—

*Mary.* Have you been looking at the  
'Dance of Death'?

*Pole.* No; but these libellous papers  
which I found  
Strewn in your palace. Look you here  
—the Pope

Pointing at me with 'Pole, the heretic,  
Thou hast burnt others, do thou burn  
thyself,

Or I will burn thee;' and this other;  
see!—

'We pray continually for the death  
Of our accursed Queen and Cardinal  
Pole.'

This last—I dare not read it her. [*Aside.*  
*Mary.* Away!

Why do you bring me these?  
I thought you knew me better. I never  
read,

I tear them; they come back upon my  
dreams.

The hands that write them should be  
burnt clean off

As Craumer's, and the fiends that utter  
them

Tongue-torn with pincers, lash'd to death,  
or lie

Famishing in black cells, while famish'd  
rats

Eat them alive. Why do they bring me  
these?

Do you mean to drive me mad?

*Pole.* I had forgotten  
How these poor libels trouble you. Your  
pardon,

Sweet cousin, and farewell! 'O bubble  
world,

Whose colours in a moment break and fly!  
Why, who said that? I know not—  
true enough!

[*Puts up the papers, all but the last,  
which falls. Exit Pole.*

*Alice.* If Cranmer's spirit were a  
mocking one,  
And heard these two, there might be  
sport for him. [*Aside.*

*Mary.* Clarence, they hate me; even  
while I speak  
There lurks a silent dagger, listening  
In some dark closet, some long gallery,  
drawn,

And panting for my blood as I go by.

*Lady Clarence.* Nay, Madam, there  
be loyal papers too,

And I have often found them.

*Mary.* Find me one!

*Lady Clarence.* Ay, Madam; but Sir  
Nicholas Heath, the Chancellor,  
Would see your Highness.

*Mary.* Wherefore should I see him?

*Lady Clarence.* Well, Madam, he  
may bring you news from Philip.

*Mary.* So, Clarence.

*Lady Clarence.* Let me first put  
up your hair;

It tumbles all abroad.

*Mary.* And the gray dawn

Of an old age that never will be mine  
Is all the clearer seen. No, no; what  
matters?

Forlorn I am, and let me look forlorn.

*Enter SIR NICHOLAS HEATH.*

*Heath.* I bring your Majesty such  
grievous news

I grieve to bring it. Madam, Calais is  
taken.

*Mary.* What traitor spoke? Here,  
let my cousin Pole

Seize him and burn him for a Lutheran.

*Heath.* Her Highness is unwell. I  
will retire.

*Lady Clarence.* Madam, your Chan-  
cellor, Sir Nicholas Heath.

*Mary.* Sir Nicholas! I am stunn'd  
—Nicholas Heath?

Methought some traitor smote me on the  
head.

What said you, my good Lord, that our  
brave English

Had sallied out from Calais and driven  
back

The Frenchmen from their trenches?

*Heath.* Alas! no.

That gateway to the mainland over which

Our flag hath floated for two hundred  
years

Is France again.

*Mary.* So; but it is not lost —  
Not yet. Send out: let England as of  
old

Rise lionlike, strike hard and deep into  
The prey they are rending from her — ay,  
and rend

The renders too. Send out, send out,  
and make

Musters in all the counties; gather all  
From sixteen years to sixty; collect the  
fleet;

Let every craft that carries sail and gun  
Steer toward Calais. Guisnes is not  
taken yet?

*Heath.* Guisnes is not taken yet.

*Mary.* There yet is hope.

*Heath.* Ah, Madam, but your people  
are so cold;

I do much fear that England will not  
care.

Methinks there is no manhood left among  
us.

*Mary.* Send out; I am too weak to  
stir abroad:

Tell my mind to the Council—to the  
Parliament:

Proclaim it to the winds. Thou art cold  
thyself

To babble of their coldness. O would I  
were

My father for an hour! Away now—  
Quick! [*Exit Heath.*]

I hoped I had served God with all my  
might!

It seems I have not. Ah! much heresy  
Shelter'd in Calais. Saints, I have re-  
built

Your shrines, set up your broken images;  
Be comfortable to me. Suffer not

That my brief reign in England be de-  
famed

Thro' all her angry chronicles hereafter  
By loss of Calais. Grant me Calais.

*Philip,*

We have made war upon the Holy  
Father

All for your sake: what good could come  
of that?

*Lady Clarence.* No, Madam, not  
against the Holy Father;

You did but help King Philip's war with  
France,

Your troops were never down in Italy.

*Mary.* I am a byword. Heretic and  
rebel

Point at me and make merry. Philip gone!  
And Calais gone! Time that I were  
gone too!

*Lady Clarence.* Nay, if the fetid gutter  
had a voice

And cried I was not clean, what should  
I care?

Or you, for heretic cries? And I believe,  
Spite of your melancholy Sir Nicholas,  
Your England is as loyal as myself.

*Mary* (*seeing the paper dropt by Pole*).  
There! there! another paper! said

you not

Many of these were loyal? Shall I try  
If this be one of such?

*Lady Clarence.* Let it be, let it be.  
God pardon me! I have never yet  
found one. [*Aside.*]

*Mary* (*reads*). 'Your people hate you  
as your husband hates you.'

Clarence, Clarence, what have I done?  
what sin

Beyond all grace, all pardon? Mother  
of God,

Thou knowest never woman meant so  
well,

And fared so ill in this disastrous world.  
My people hate me and desire my death.

*Lady Clarence.* No, Madam, no.

*Mary.* My husband hates me, and  
desires my death.

*Lady Clarence.* No, Madam; these  
are libels.

*Mary.* I hate myself, and I desire my  
death.

*Lady Clarence.* Long live your  
Majesty! Shall Alice sing you

One of her pleasant songs? Alice, my  
child,

Bring us your lute. (*Alice goes.*) They  
say the gloom of Saul

Was lighten'd by young David's harp.

*Mary.* Too young!

And never knew a Philip.

*Re-enter Alice.*

Give me the lute.

He hates me!

(*She sings.*)

Hapless doom of woman happy in betrothing!  
Beauty passes like a breath and love is lost in  
loathing:

Low, my lute; speak low, my lute, but say the  
world is nothing—

Low, lute, low!

Love will hover round the flowers when they first  
awaken:

Love will fly the fallen leaf, and not be over-  
taken;

Low, my lute! oh low, my lute! we fade and are  
forsaken—

Low, dear lute, low!

Take it away! not low enough for me!

*Alice.* Your Grace hath a low voice.

*Mary.* How dare you say it?

Even for that he hates me. A low voice  
Lost in a wilderness where none can  
hear!

A voice of shipwreck on a shoreless sea!  
A low voice from the dust and from the  
grave

(*Sitting on the ground.*) There, am I  
low enough now?

*Alice.* Good Lord! how grim and  
ghastly looks her Grace,

With both her knees drawn upward to  
her chin.

There was an old-world tomb beside my  
father's,

And this was open'd, and the dead were  
found

Sitting, and in this fashion; she looks a  
corpse.

*Enter* LADY MAGDALEN DACRES.

*Lady Magdalen.* Madam, the Count  
de Feria waits without,

In hopes to see your Highness.

*Lady Clarence* (*pointing to Mary*).

Wait he must—

Her trance again. She neither sees nor  
hears,

And may not speak for hours.

*Lady Magdalen.* Unhappiest  
Of Queens and wives and women!

*Alice* (*in the foreground with Lady  
Magdalen*). And all along  
Of Philip.

*Lady Magdalen.* Not so loud! Our  
Clarence there

Sees ever such an aureole round the  
Queen,

It gilds the greatest wronger of her peace,  
Who stands the nearest to her.

*Alice.* Ay, this Philip;

I used to love the Queen with all my  
heart—

God help me, but methinks I love her less  
For such a dotage upon such a man.

I would I were as tall and strong as you.

*Lady Magdalen.* I seem half-shamed  
at times to be so tall.

*Alice.* You are the stateliest deer in  
all the herd—

Beyond his aim—but I am small and  
scandalous,

And love to hear bad tales of Philip.

*Lady Magdalen.* Why?

I never heard him utter worse of you  
Than that you were low-statured.

*Alice.* Does he think

Low stature is low nature, or all women's  
Low as his own?

*Lady Magdalen.* There you strike in  
the nail.

This coarseness is a want of phantasy.

It is the low man thinks the woman low;  
Sin is too dull to see beyond himself.

*Alice.* Ah, Magdalen, sin is bold as  
well as dull.

How dared he?

*Lady Magdalen.* Stupid soldiers oft  
are bold.

Poor lads, they see not what the general  
sees,

A risk of utter ruin. I am *not*

Beyond his aim, or was not.

*Alice.* Who? Not you?

Tell, tell me; save my credit with myself.

*Lady Magdalen.* I never breathed it  
to a bird in the eaves,

Would not for all the stars and maiden  
moon

Our drooping Queen should know! In  
Hampton Court

My window look'd upon the corridor;  
And I was robing;—this poor throat of

mine,

Barer than I should wish a man to see it,—  
When he we speak of drove the window

back,

And, like a thief, push'd in his royal  
hand;



But by God's providence a good stout  
staff

Lay near me; and you know me strong  
of arm;

I do believe I lamed his Majesty's  
For a day or two, tho', give the Devil  
his due,

I never found he bore me any spite.

*Alice.* I would she could have wedded  
that poor youth,

My Lord of Devon — light enough, God  
knows,

And mixt with Wyatt's rising — and the  
boy

Not out of him — but neither cold, coarse,  
cruel,

And more than all — no Spaniard.

*Lady Clarence.* Not so loud.

Lord Devon, girls! what are you whis-  
pering here?

*Alice.* Probing an old state-secret —  
how it chanced

That this young Earl was sent on foreign  
travel,

Not lost his head.

*Lady Clarence.* There was no proof  
against him.

*Alice.* Nay, Madam; did not Gardiner  
intercept

A letter which the Count de Noailles  
wrote

To that dead traitor Wyatt, with full  
proof

Of Courtenay's treason? What became  
of that?

*Lady Clarence.* Some say that Gardi-  
ner, out of love for him,

Burnt it, and some relate that it was  
lost

When Wyatt sack'd the Chancellor's  
house in Southwark.

Let dead things rest.

*Alice.* Ay, and with him who died  
Alone in Italy.

*Lady Clarence.* Much changed, I  
hear,

Had put off levity and put graveness on.  
The foreign courts report him in his  
manner

Noble as his young person and old shield.  
It might be so — but all is over now;

He caught a chill in the lagoons of Venice,  
And died in Padua.

*Mary (looking up suddenly).* Died in  
the true faith?

*Lady Clarence.* Ay, Madam, happily.  
*Mary.* Happier he than I.

*Lady Magdalen.* It seems her High-  
ness hath awaken'd. Think you

That I might dare to tell her that the  
Count —

*Mary.* I will see no man hence for  
evermore,

Saving my confessor and my cousin Pole.  
*Lady Magdalen.* It is the Count de

Feria, my dear lady.

*Mary.* What Count?  
*Lady Magdalen.* The Count de Feria,  
from his Majesty

King Philip.

*Mary.* Philip! quick! loop up my  
hair!

Throw cushions on that seat, and make  
it throne-like.

Arrange my dress — the gorgeous Indian  
shawl

That Philip brought me in our happy  
days! —

That covers all. So — am I somewhat  
Queenlike,

Bride of the mightiest sovereign upon  
earth?

*Lady Clarence.* Ay, so your Grace  
would bide a moment yet.

*Mary.* No, no, he brings a letter.  
I may die

Before I read it. Let me see him at  
once.

*Enter* COUNT DE FERIA (*kneels*).

*Feria.* I trust your Grace is well.  
(*Aside*) How her hand burns!

*Mary.* I am not well, but it will  
better me,

Sir Count, to read the letter which you  
bring.

*Feria.* Madam, I bring no letter.

*Mary.* How! no letter?

*Feria.* His Highness is so vex'd with  
strange affairs —

*Mary.* That his own wife is no affair  
of his.

*Feria.* Nay, Madam, nay! he sends  
his veriest love,

And says, he will come quickly.

*Mary.* Doth he, indeed?  
You, sir, do *you* remember what *you* said  
When last you came to England?

*Feria.* Madam, I brought  
My King's congratulations; it was hoped  
Your Highness was once more in happy  
state  
To give him an heir male.

*Mary.* Sir, you said more;  
You said he would come quickly. I had  
horses

On all the road from Dover, day and  
night;

On all the road from Harwich, night and  
day;

But the child came not, and the husband  
came not;

And yet he will come quickly. . . Thou  
hast learnt

Thy lesson, and I mine. There is no  
need

For Philip so to shame himself again.

Return,

And tell him that I know he comes no  
more.

Tell him at last I know his love is  
dead,

And that I am in state to bring forth  
death—

Thou art commission'd to Elizabeth,

And not to me!

*Feria.* Mere compliments and wishes.  
But shall I take some message from your  
Grace?

*Mary.* Tell her to come and close my  
dying eyes,

And wear my crown, and dance upon my  
grave.

*Feria.* Then I may say your Grace  
will see your sister?

Your Grace is too low-spirited. Air and  
sunshine.

I would we had you, Madam, in our warm  
Spain.

You droop in your dim London.

*Mary.* Have him away!  
I sicken of his readiness.

*Lady Clarence.* My Lord Count,  
Her Highness is too ill for colloquy.

*Feria* (*kneels, and kisses her hand*). I  
wish her Highness better. (*Aside*)  
How her hand burns! [*Exeunt.*]

SCENE III.—A HOUSE NEAR  
LONDON.

ELIZABETH, STEWARD OF THE HOUSE-  
HOLD, ATTENDANTS.

*Elizabeth.* There's half an angel  
wrong'd in your account;  
Methinks I am all angel, that I bear it  
Without more ruffling. Cast it o'er  
again.

*Steward.* I were whole devil if I  
wrong'd you, Madam.

[*Exit Steward.*]

*Attendant.* The Count de Feria, from  
the King of Spain.

*Elizabeth.* Ah!—let him enter. Nay,  
you need not go:

[*To her Ladies.*]

Remain within the chamber, but apart.  
We'll have no private conference. Wel-  
come to England!

*Enter FERIA.*

*Feria.* Fair island star!

*Elizabeth.* I shine! What else,  
Sir Count?

*Feria.* As far as France, and into  
Philip's heart.

My King would know if you be fairly  
served,

And lodged, and treated.

*Elizabeth.* You see the lodging, sir,  
I am well-served, and am in everything  
Most loyal and most grateful to the  
Queen.

*Feria.* You should be grateful to my  
master, too.

He spoke of this; and unto him you owe  
That Mary hath acknowledged you her  
heir.

*Elizabeth.* No, not to her nor him;  
but to the people,

Who know my right, and love me, as I  
love

The people! whom God aid!

*Feria.* You will be Queen,  
And, were I Philip—

*Elizabeth.* Wherefore pause you—  
what?

*Feria.* Nay, but I speak from mine  
own self, not him;

Your royal sister cannot last; your hand

Will be much coveted! What a delicate one!

Our Spanish ladies have none such — and there,

Were you in Spain, this fine fair gossamer gold —

Like sun-gilt breathings on a frosty dawn —

That hovers round your shoulder —

*Elizabeth.* Is it so fine?

Troth, some have said so.

*Feria.* — would be deemed a miracle.

*Elizabeth.* Your Philip hath gold hair and golden beard;

There must be ladies many with hair like mine.

*Feria.* Some few of Gothic blood have golden hair,

But none like yours.

*Elizabeth.* I am happy you approve it.

*Feria.* But as to Philip and your Grace — consider, —

If such a one as you should match with Spain,

What hinders but that Spain and England join'd,

Should make the mightiest empire earth has known.

Spain would be England on her seas, and England

Mistress of the Indies.

*Elizabeth.* It may chance, that England

Will be the Mistress of the Indies yet, Without the help of Spain.

*Feria.* Impossible;

Except you put Spain down.

Wide of the mark ev'n for a madman's dream.

*Elizabeth.* Perhaps; but we have seamen. Count de Feria,

I take it that the King hath spoken to you;

But is Don Carlos such a goodly match?

*Feria.* Don Carlos, Madam, is but twelve years old.

*Elizabeth.* Ay, tell the King that I will muse upon it;

He is my good friend, and I would keep him so;

But — he would have me Catholic of Rome,

And that I scarce can be; and, sir, till now

My sister's marriage, and my father's marriages,

Made me full fain to live and die a maid. But I am much beholden to your King.

Have you aught else to tell me?

*Feria.* Nothing, Madam,

Save that methought I gather'd from the Queen

That she would see your Grace before she — died.

*Elizabeth.* God's death! and wherefore spake you not before?

We dally with our lazy moments here, And hers are number'd. Horses there, without!

I am much beholden to the King, your master.

Why did you keep me prating? Horses, there! [*Exit Elizabeth, etc.*]

*Feria.* So from a clear sky falls the thunderbolt!

Don Carlos? Madam, if you marry Philip,

Then I and he will snaffle your 'God's death,'

And break your paces in, and make you tame;

God's death, forsooth — you do not know King Philip. [*Exit.*]

SCENE IV. — LONDON. BEFORE THE PALACE.

*A light burning within. VOICES of the night passing.*

*First.* Is not yon light in the Queen's chamber?

*Second.* Ay,

They say she's dying.

*First.* So is Cardinal Pole.

May the great angels join their wings, and make

Down for their heads to heaven!

*Second.* Amen. Come on. [*Exeunt.*]

TWO OTHERS.

*First.* There's the Queen's light. I hear she cannot live.

*Second.* God curse her and her Legate! Gardiner burns

Already; but to pay them full in kind,

The hottest hold in all the devil's den  
 Were but a sort of winter; sir, in Guernsey,  
 I watch'd a woman burn; and in her  
 agony  
 The mother came upon her—a child  
 was born—  
 And, sir, they hurl'd it back into the  
 fire,  
 That, being but baptized in fire, the  
 babe  
 Might be in fire for ever. Ah, good  
 neighbour,  
 There should be something fierier than  
 fire  
 To yield them their deserts.

*First.* Amen to all  
 Your wish, and further.

*A Third Voice.* Deserts! Amen to  
 what? Whose deserts? Yours? You  
 have a gold ring on your finger, and soft  
 raiment about your body; and is not the  
 woman up yonder sleeping after all she  
 has done, in peace and quietness, on a  
 soft bed, in a closed room, with light,  
 fire, physic, tendance; and I have seen  
 the true men of Christ lying famine-dead  
 by scores, and under no ceiling but the  
 cloud that wept on them, not for them.

*First.* Friend, tho' so late, it is not  
 safe to preach.

You had best go home. What are you?

*Third.* What am I? One who cries  
 continually with sweat and tears to the  
 Lord God that it would please Him out  
 of His infinite love to break down all  
 kingship and queenship, all priesthood  
 and prelacy; to cancel and abolish all  
 bonds of human allegiance, all the magis-  
 tracy, all the nobles, and all the wealthy;  
 and to send us again, according to His  
 promise, the one King, the Christ, and  
 all things in common, as in the day of the  
 first church, when Christ Jesus was King.

*First.* If ever I heard a madman,—  
 let's away!

Why, you long-winded— Sir, you go  
 beyond me.

I pride myself on being moderate.  
 Good night! Go home. Besides, your  
 curse so loud,

The watch will hear you. Get you home  
 at once. *[Exeunt.]*

SCENE V.—LONDON. A ROOM IN  
 THE PALACE.

*A Gallery on one side. The Moonlight  
 streaming through a range of windows  
 on the wall opposite. MARY, LADY  
 CLARENCE, LADY MAGDALEN DACRES,  
 ALICE. QUEEN pacing the Gallery.  
 A writing-table in front. QUEEN  
 comes to the table and writes and goes  
 again, pacing the Gallery.*

*Lady Clarence.* Mine eyes are dim:  
 what hath she written? read.

*Alice.* 'I am dying, Philip; come to  
 me.'

*Lady Magdalen.* There—up and  
 down, poor lady, up and down.

*Alice.* And how her shadow crosses  
 one by one

The moonlight casements pattern'd on  
 the wall,

Following her like her sorrow. She  
 turns again.

*[Queen sits and writes, and goes again.  
 Lady Clarence.* What hath she written  
 now?

*Alice.* Nothing; but 'come, come,  
 come,' and all awry,

And blotted by her tears. This cannot  
 last. *[Queen returns.]*

*Mary.* I whistle to the bird has  
 broken cage,

And all in vain. *[Sitting down.]*  
 Calais gone—Guisnes gone, too—and  
 Philip gone!

*Lady Clarence.* Dear Madam, Philip  
 is but at the wars;

I cannot doubt but that he comes again;  
 And he is with you in a measure still.

I never look'd upon so fair a likeness  
 As your great King in armour there, his  
 hand

Upon his helmet.  
*[Pointing to the portrait of Philip on  
 the wall.]*

*Mary.* Doth he not look noble?  
 I had heard of him in battle over seas,  
 And I would have my warrior all in arms.  
 He said it was not courtly to stand  
 helmeted

Before the Queen. He had his gracious  
 moment,

Altho' you'll not believe me. How he smiles

As if he loved me yet!

*Lady Clarence.* And so he does.

*Mary.* He never loved me — nay, he could not love me.

It was his father's policy against France. I am eleven years older than he, poor boy!

[*Weeps.*]

*Alice.* That was a lusty boy of twenty-seven;

[*Aside.*]

Poor enough in God's grace!

*Mary.* — And all in vain!

The Queen of Scots is married to the Dauphin,

And Charles, the lord of this low world, is gone;

And all his wars and wisdoms past away;

And in a moment I shall follow him.

*Lady Clarence.* Nay, dearest Lady, see your good physician.

*Mary.* Drugs — but he knows they cannot help me — says

That rest is all — tells me I must not think —

That I must rest — I shall rest by and by. Catch the wild cat, cage him, and when he springs

And maims himself against the bars, say 'rest':

Why, you must kill him if you would have him rest —

Dead or alive you cannot make him happy.

*Lady Clarence.* Your Majesty has lived so pure a life,

And done such mighty things by Holy Church,

I trust that God will make you happy yet.

*Mary.* What is the strange thing happiness? Sit down here:

Tell me thine happiest hour.

*Lady Clarence.* I will, if that May make your Grace forget yourself a little.

There runs a shallow brook across our field

For twenty miles, where the black crow flies five,

And doth so bound and babble all the way

As if itself were happy. It was May-time,

And I was walking with the man I loved. I loved him, but I thought I was not loved.

And both were silent, letting the wild brook

Speak for us — till he stoop'd and gather'd one

From out a bed of thick forget-me-nots, Look'd hard and sweet at me, and gave it me.

I took it, tho' I did not know I took it, And put it in my bosom, and all at once I felt his arms about me, and his lips —

*Mary.* O God! I have been too slack, too slack;

There are Hot Gospellers even among our guards —

Nobles we dared not touch. We have but burnt

The heretic priest, workmen, and women and children.

Wet, famine, ague, fever, storm, wreck, wrath, —

We have so play'd the coward; but by God's grace,

We'll follow Philip's leading, and set up The Holy Office here — garner the wheat,

And burn the tares with unquenchable fire!

Burn! —

Fie, what a savour! tell the cooks to close

The doors of all the offices below.

Latimer!

Sir, we are private with our women here —

Ever a rough, blunt, and uncourtly fellow —

Thou light a torch that never will go out!

'Tis out — mine flames. Women, the Holy Father

Has ta'en the legateship from our cousin Pole —

Was that well done? and poor Pole pines of it,

As I do, to the death. I am but a woman, I have no power. — Ah, weak and meek

old man,

Seven-fold dishonour'd even in the sight Of thine own secretaries — No, no. No pardon! —

Why that was false: there is the right hand still

Beckons me hence.  
 Sir, you were burnt for heresy, not for  
 treason,  
 Remember that! 'twas I and Bonner did  
 it,  
 And Pole; we are three to one — Have  
 you found mercy there,  
 Grant it me here: and see, he smiles and  
 goes,  
 Gentle as in life.

*Alice.* Madam, who goes? King  
 Philip?

*Mary.* No, Philip comes and goes,  
 but never goes.

Women, when I am dead,  
 Open my heart, and there you will find  
 written

Two names, Philip and Calais; open  
 his, —

So that he have one, —  
 You will find Philip only, policy, policy, —  
 Ay, worse than that — not one hour true  
 to me!

Foul maggots crawling in a fester'd vice!  
 Adulterous to the very heart of Hell.  
 Hast thou a knife?

*Alice.* Ay, Madam, but o' God's  
 mercy —

*Mary.* Fool, think'st thou I would  
 peril mine own soul  
 By slaughter of the body? I could not,  
 girl,

Not this way — callous with a constant  
 stripe,

Unwoundable. The knife!

*Alice.* Take heed, take heed!  
 The blade is keen as death.

*Mary.* This Philip shall not  
 Stare in upon me in my haggardness;  
 Old, miserable, diseased,  
 Incapable of children. Come thou down.  
 [*Cuts out the picture and throws it down.*  
 Lie there. (*Wails*) O God, I have kill'd  
 my Philip!

*Alice.* No,  
 Madam, you have but cut the canvas  
 out;

We can replace it.

*Mary.* All is well then; rest —  
 I will to rest; he said, I must have rest.

[*Cries of 'Elizabeth' in the street.*  
 A cry! What's that? Elizabeth? revolt?  
 A new Northumberland, another Wyatt?

I'll fight it on the threshold of the  
 grave.

*Lady Clarence.* Madam, your royal  
 sister comes to see you.

*Mary.* I will not see her.

Who knows if Boleyn's daughter be my  
 sister?

I will see none except the priest. Your  
 arm. [*To Lady Clarence.*

O Saint of Aragon, with that sweet worn  
 smile

Among thy patient wrinkles — Help me  
 hence. [*Exeunt.*

*The PRIEST passes. Enter ELIZABETH  
 and SIR WILLIAM CECIL.*

*Elizabeth.* Good counsel yours —

No one in waiting? still,  
 As if the chamberlain were Death him-  
 self!

The room she sleeps in — is not this the  
 way?

No, that way there are voices. Am I  
 too late?

Cecil . . . God guide me lest I lose the  
 way. [*Exit Elizabeth.*

*Cecil.* Many points weather'd, many  
 perilous ones,

At last a harbour opens; but therein  
 Sunk rocks — they need fine steering —  
 much it is

To be nor mad, nor bigot — have a  
 mind —

Nor let Priests' talk, or dream of worlds  
 to be,

Miscolour things about her — sudden  
 touches

For him, or him — sunk rocks; no pas-  
 sionate faith —

But — if let be — balance and compro-  
 mise;

Brave, wary, sane to the heart of her —  
 a Tudor

School'd by the shadow of death — a  
 Boleyn, too,

Glancing across the Tudor — not so well.

*Enter ALICE.*

How is the good Queen now?

*Alice.* Away from Philip.  
 Back in her childhood — prattling to her  
 mother

Of her betrothal to the Emperor Charles,



And childlike-jealous of him again — and  
 once  
 She thank'd her father sweetly for his  
 book  
 Against that godless German. Ah, those  
 days  
 Were happy. It was never merry world  
 In England, since the Bible came among  
 us.

*Cecil.* And who says that?

*Alice.* It is a saying among the  
 Catholics.

*Cecil.* It never will be merry world  
 in England,  
 Till all men have their Bible, rich and  
 poor.

*Alice.* The Queen is dying, or you  
 dare not say it.

*Enter ELIZABETH.*

*Elizabeth.* The Queen is dead.

*Cecil.* Then here she stands! my  
 homage.

*Elizabeth.* She knew me, and ac-  
 knowledged me her heir,  
 Pray'd me to pay her debts, and keep  
 the Faith;  
 Then claspt the cross, and pass'd away  
 in peace.  
 I left her lying still and beautiful,

More beautiful than in life. Why would  
 you vex yourself,  
 Poor sister? Sir, I swear I have no heart  
 To be your Queen. To reign is restless  
 fence,  
 Tierce, quart, and trickery. Peace is  
 with the dead.

Her life was winter, for her spring was  
 nipt:

And she loved much: pray God she be  
 forgiven.

*Cecil.* Peace with the dead, who never  
 were at peace!

Yet she loved one so much — I needs  
 must say —

That never English monarch dying left  
 England so little.

*Elizabeth.* But with Cecil's aid  
 And others, if our person be secured  
 From traitor stabs — we will make Eng-  
 land great.

*Enter PAGET, and other LORDS OF THE  
 COUNCIL, SIR RALPH BAGENHALL, etc.*

*Lords.* God save Elizabeth, the Queen  
 of England!

*Bagenhall.* God save the Crown! the  
 Papacy is no more.

*Paget (aside).* Are we so sure of that?

*Acclamation.* God save the Queen!

# HAROLD:

## A DRAMA.

TO HIS EXCELLENCY

THE RIGHT HON. LORD LYTTON,

*Viceroy and Governor-General of India.*

MY DEAR LORD LYTTON, — After old-world records — such as the Bayeux tapestry and the Roman de Rou, — Edward Freeman's History of the Norman Conquest, and your father's Historical Romance treating of the same times, have been mainly helpful to me in writing this Drama. Your father dedicated his 'Harold' to my father's brother; allow me to dedicate my 'Harold' to yourself.

A. TENNYSON.

### SHOW-DAY AT BATTLE ABBEY, 1876.

A GARDEN here — May breath and bloom of spring —  
The cuckoo yonder from an English elm  
Crying 'with my false egg I overwhelm  
The native nest: ' and fancy hears the ring  
Of harness, and that deathful arrow sing,  
And Saxon battleaxe clang on Norman helm.  
Here rose the dragon-banner of our realm:  
Here fought, here fell, our Norman-slander'd king.  
O Garden blossoming out of English blood!  
O strange hate-healer Time! We stroll and stare  
Where might made right eight hundred years ago;  
Might, right? ay good, so all things make for good —  
But he and he, if soul be soul, are where  
Each stands full face with all he did below.

### DRAMATIS PERSONÆ.

KING EDWARD THE CONFESSOR.

STIGAND, *created Archbishop of Canterbury by the Antipope Benedict.*

ALDRED, *Archbishop of York.*

THE NORMAN BISHOP OF LONDON.

HAROLD, *Earl of Wessex, afterwards King of England*

TOSTIG, *Earl of Northumbria*

GURTH, *Earl of East Anglia*

LEOFWIN, *Earl of Kent and Essex*

WULFNOTH

COUNT WILLIAM OF NORMANDY.

WILLIAM MALET, *a Norman Noble.*<sup>1</sup>

EDWIN, *Earl of Mercia*

MORCAR, *Earl of Northumbria after Tostig*

GAMEL, *a Northumbrian Thane.*

ROLF, *a Ponthieu Fisherman.*

OSGOD and ATHELRIC, *Canons from Waltham.*

THE QUEEN, *Edward the Confessor's Wife, Daughter of Godwin.*

ALDWYTH, *Daughter of Alfgar and Widow of Griffyth, King of Wales.*

EDITH, *Ward of King Edward.*

WILLIAM RUFUS.

} *Sons of Alfgar of Mercia.*

GUY, *Count of Ponthieu.*

HUGH MARGOT, *a Norman Monk.*

Courtiers, Earls and Thanes, Men-at-Arms, Canons of Waltham, Fishermen, etc.

<sup>1</sup> . . . quidam partim Normannus et Anglus  
Comptar Herald. (*Guy of Amiens*, 387.)

## ACT I.

## SCENE I.—LONDON. THE KING'S PALACE.

(*A comet seen through the open window.*)

ALDWYTH, GAMEL, COURTIERS *talking together.*

*First Courtier.* Lo? there once more  
— this is the seventh night!  
Yon grimly-glaring, treble-brandish'd  
scourge  
Of England!

*Second Courtier.* Horrible!

*First Courtier.* Look you, there's a star  
That dances in it as mad with agony!

*Third Courtier.* Ay, like a spirit in  
Hell who skips and flies  
To right and left, and cannot scape the  
flame.

*Second Courtier.* Steam'd upward  
from the undescendible  
Abysm.

*First Courtier.* Or floated downward  
from the throne  
Of God Almighty.

*Aldwyth.* Gamel, son of Orm,  
What thinkest thou this means?

*Gamel.* War, my dear lady!

*Aldwyth.* Doth this affright thee?

*Gamel.* Mightily, my dear lady!

*Aldwyth.* Stand by me then, and look  
upon my face,  
Not on the comet.

(*Enter MORCAR.*)

Brother! why so pale?

*Morcar.* It glares in heaven, it flares  
upon the Thames,

The people are as thick as bees below,  
They hum like bees, — they cannot speak  
— for awe;

Look to the skies, then to the river, strike  
Their hearts, and hold their babies up to it.  
I think that they would Molochise them  
too,

To have the heavens clear.

*Aldwyth.* They fright not me.

(*Enter LEOFWIN, after him GURTH.*)

Ask thou Lord Leofwin what he thinks  
of this!

*Morcar.* Lord Leofwin, dost thou  
believe, that these  
Three rods of blood-red fire up yonder  
mean

The doom of England and the wrath of  
Heaven?

*Bishop of London (passing).* Did ye  
not cast with bestial violence

Our holy Norman bishops down from all  
Their thrones in England? I alone  
remain.

Why should not Heaven be wroth?

*Leofwin.* With us, or thee?

*Bishop of London.* Did ye not outlaw  
your archbishop Robert,  
Robert of Jumiéges — well-nigh murder  
him too?

Is there no reason for the wrath of  
Heaven?

*Leofwin.* Why then the wrath of  
Heaven hath three tails,

The devil only one.

[*Exit Bishop of London.*]

(*Enter ARCHBISHOP STIGAND.*)

Ask our Archbishop.  
Stigand should know the purposes of  
Heaven.

*Stigand.* Not I. I cannot read the  
face of heaven;

Perhaps our vines will grow the better for it.

*Leofwin (laughing).* He can but read  
the king's face on his coins.

*Stigand.* Ay, ay, young lord, *there* the  
king's face is power.

*Gurth.* O father, mock not at a public  
- fear,

But tell us, is this pendent hell in heaven  
A harm to England?

*Stigand.* Ask it of King Edward!  
And he may tell thee, *I* am a harm to  
England.

Old uncanonical Stigand — ask of *me*  
Who had my pallium from an Antipope!  
Not he the man — for in our windy world  
What's up is faith, what's down is heresy.  
Our friends, the Normans, help to shake  
his chair.

I have a Norman fever on me, son,  
And cannot answer sanely. . . . What it  
means?

Ask our broad Earl.

[*Pointing to HAROLD, who enters.*]

*Harold (seeing Gamel).* Hail, Gamel,  
son of Orm!

Albeit no rolling stone, my good friend  
Gamel,

Thou hast rounded since we met. Thy  
life at home

Is easier than mine here. Look! am I not  
Work-wan, flesh-fallen?

*Gamel.* Art thou sick, good Earl?

*Harold.* Sick as an autumn swallow  
for a voyage,

Sick for an idle week of hawk and hound  
Beyond the seas—a change! When  
camest thou hither?

*Gamel.* To-day, good Earl.

*Harold.* Is the North quiet, Gamel?

*Gamel.* Nay, there be murmurs, for  
thy brother breaks us

With over-taxing—quiet, ay, as yet—  
Nothing as yet.

*Harold.* Stand by him, mine old  
friend,

Thou art a great voice in Northumber-  
land!

Advise him: speak him sweetly, he will  
hear thee.

He is passionate but honest. Stand thou  
by him!

More talk of this to-morrow, if yon weird  
sign

Not blast us in our dreams.—Well, father  
Stigand—

[*To Stigand, who advances to him.*

*Stigand (pointing to the comet).* War  
there, my son? is that the doom  
of England?

*Harold.* Why not the doom of all the  
world as well?

For all the world sees it as well as Eng-  
land.

These meteors came and went before our  
day,

Not harming any: it threatens us no  
more

Than French or Norman. War? the  
world that follows

Things that seem jerk'd out of the com-  
mon rut

Of Nature is the hot religious fool,

Who, seeing war in heaven, for heaven's  
credit

Makes it on earth: but look, where  
Edward draws

A faint foot hither, leaning upon Tostig.  
He hath learnt to love our Tostig much  
of late.

*Leofwin.* And *he* hath learnt, despite  
the tiger in him,

To sleek and supple himself to the king's  
hand.

*Gurth.* I trust the kingly touch that  
cures the evil

May serve to charm the tiger out of him.

*Leofwin.* He hath as much of cat as  
tiger in him.

Our Tostig loves the hand and not the  
man.

*Harold.* Nay! Better die than lie!

*Enter KING, QUEEN, and TOSTIG.*

*Edward.* In heaven signs!  
Signs upon earth! signs everywhere!

your Priests

Gross, worldly, simoniacal, unlearn'd!  
They scarce can read their Psalter; and  
your churches

Uncouth, unhandsome, while in Norman-  
land

God speaks thro' abler voices, as He  
dwells

In stately shrines. I say not this, as  
being

Half Norman-blooded, nor as some have  
held,

Because I love the Norman better—no,  
But dreading God's revenge upon this  
realm

For narrowness and coldness: and I say  
it

For the last time perchance, before I go  
To find the sweet refreshment of the  
Saints.

I have lived a life of utter purity:  
I have builded the great church of Holy  
Peter:

I have wrought miracles—to God the  
glory—

And miracles will in my name be wrought  
Hereafter.—I have fought the fight and  
go—

I see the flashing of the gates of pearl—  
And it is well with me, tho' some of you  
Have scorn'd me—ay—but after I am  
gone

Woe, woe to England! I have had a  
vision;

The seven sleepers in the cave at Ephesus  
Have turn'd from right to left.

*Harold.* My most dear Master,  
What matters? let them turn from left to  
right

And sleep again.

*Tostig.* Too hardy with thy king!  
A life of prayer and fasting well may see  
Deeper into the mysteries of heaven  
Than thou, good brother.

*Aldwyth (aside).* Sees he into thine,  
That thou wouldst have his promise for  
the crown?

*Edward.* Tostig says true; my son,  
thou art too hard,  
Not stagger'd by this ominous earth and  
heaven:

But heaven and earth are threads of the  
same loom,

Play into one another, and weave the web  
That may confound thee yet.

*Harold.* Nay, I trust not,  
For I have served thee long and honestly.

*Edward.* I know it, son; I am not  
thankless: thou

Hast broken all my foes, lighten'd for me  
The weight of this poor crown, and left  
me time

And peace for prayer to gain a better one.  
Twelve years of service! England loves  
thee for it.

Thou art the man to rule her!

*Aldwyth (aside).* So, not Tostig!

*Harold.* And after those twelve years  
a boon, my king,

Respite, a holiday: thyself wast wont  
To love the chase: thy leave to set my feet  
On board, and hunt and hawk beyond  
the seas!

*Edward.* What with this flaming  
horror overhead?

*Harold.* Well, when it passes then.

*Edward.* Ay if it pass.  
Go not to Normandy — go not to Nor-  
mandy.

*Harold.* And wherefore not, my king,  
to Normandy?

Is not my brother Wulfnoth hostage there  
For my dead father's loyalty to thee?

I pray thee, let me hence and bring him  
home.

*Edward.* Not thee, my son: some  
other messenger.

*Harold.* And why not me, my lord,  
to Normandy?

Is not the Norman Count thy friend and  
mine?

*Edward.* I pray thee, do not go to  
Normandy.

*Harold.* Because my father drove the  
Normans out  
Of England? — That was many a summer  
gone —

Forgotten and forgiven by them and thee.

*Edward.* Harold, I will not yield thee  
leave to go.

*Harold.* Why then to Flanders. I  
will hawk and hunt

In Flanders.

*Edward.* Be there not fair woods and  
fields

In England? Wilful, wilful. Go — the  
Saints

Pilot and prosper all thy wandering out  
And homeward. Tostig, I am faint again.  
Son Harold, I will in and pray for thee.

[*Exit, leaning on Tostig, and fol-  
lowed by Stigand, Morcar, and  
Courtiers.*

*Harold.* What lies upon the mind of  
our good king  
That he should harp this way on Nor-  
mandy?

*Queen.* Brother, the king is wiser  
than he seems;  
And Tostig knows it; Tostig loves the  
king.

*Harold.* And love should know; and  
— be the king so wise, —  
Then Tostig too were wiser than he  
seems.

I love the man but not his phantasies.

(*Re-enter TOSTIG.*)

Well, brother,  
When didst thou hear from thy North-  
umbria?

*Tostig.* When did I hear aught but  
this 'When' from thee?

Leave me alone, brother, with my North-  
umbria:

She is *my* mistress, let *me* look to her!  
The King hath made me Earl; make me  
not fool!

Nor make the King a fool, who made  
me Earl!

*Harold.* No, Tostig — lest I make myself a fool  
Who made the King who made thee,  
make thee Earl.

*Tostig.* Why chafe me then? Thou knowest I soon go wild.

*Gurth.* Come, come! as yet thou art not gone so wild  
But thou canst hear the best and wisest of us.

*Harold.* So says old Gurth, not I: yet hear! thine earldom,  
Tostig, hath been a kingdom. Their old crown

Is yet a force among them, a sun set  
But leaving light enough for Alfgar's house

To strike thee down by — nay, this ghastly glare  
May heat their fancies.

*Tostig.* My most worthy brother,  
Thou art the quietest man in all the world —

Ay, ay and wise in peace and great in war —

Pray God the people choose thee for their king!

But all the powers of the house of Godwin  
Are not enframed in thee.

*Harold.* Thank the Saints, no!  
But thou hast drain'd them shallow by thy tolls,

And thou art ever here about the King:  
Thine absence well may seem a want of care.

Cling to their love; for, now the sons of Godwin

Sit topmost in the field of England, envy,  
Like the rough bear beneath the tree,  
good brother,

Waits till the man let go.

*Tostig.* Good counsel truly!  
I heard from my Northumbria yesterday.

*Harold.* How goes it then with thy Northumbria? Well?

*Tostig.* And wouldst thou that it went aught else than well?

*Harold.* I would it went as well as with mine earldom,

Leofwin's and Gurth's.

*Tostig.* Ye govern milder men.

*Gurth.* We have made them milder by just government.

*Tostig.* Ay, ever give yourselves your own good word.

*Leofwin.* An honest gift, by all the Saints, if giver

And taker be but honest! but they bribe Each other, and so often, an honest world Will not believe them.

*Harold.* I may tell thee, Tostig, I heard from thy Northumberland to-day.

*Tostig.* From spies of thine to spy my nakedness

In my poor North!

*Harold.* There is a movement there, A blind one — nothing yet.

*Tostig.* Crush it at once  
With all the power I have! — I must — I will! —

Crush it half-born! Fool still? or wisdom there,

My wise head-shaking Harold?

*Harold.* Make not thou The nothing something. Wisdom when in power

And wisest, should not frown as Power, but smile

As kindness, watching all, till the true *must*

Shall make her strike as Power: but when to strike —

O Tostig, O dear brother — If they prance, Rein in, not lash them, lest they rear and run

And break both neck and axle.

*Tostig.* Good again!  
Good counsel tho' scarce needed. Pour not water.

In the full vessel running out at top To swamp the house.

*Leofwin.* Nor thou be a wild thing Out of the waste, to turn and bite the hand

Would help thee from the trap.

*Tostig.* Thou playest in tune.

*Leofwin.* To the deaf adder thee, that wilt not dance

However wisely charm'd.

*Tostig.* No more, no more!

*Gurth.* I likewise cry 'no more.' Unwholesome talk

For Godwin's house! Leofwin, thou hast a tongue!

Tostig, thou look'st as thou wouldst spring upon him.



St. Olaf, not while I am by! Come, come,  
Join hands, let brethren dwell in unity;  
Let kith and kin stand close as our  
shield-wall,

Who breaks us then? I say, thou hast a  
tongue,

And Tostig is not stout enough to bear it.  
Vex him not, Leofwin.

*Tostig.* No, I am not vext, —  
Altho' ye seek to vex me, one and all.

I have to make report of my good earl-  
dom

To the good king who gave it — not to  
you —

Not any of you. — I am not vext at all.

*Harold.* The king? the king is ever  
at his prayers;

In all that handles matter of the state  
I am the king.

*Tostig.* That shalt thou never be  
If I can thwart thee.

*Harold.* Brother, brother!

*Tostig.* Away!  
[*Exit Tostig.*]

*Queen.* Spite of this grisly star ye  
three must gall

Poor Tostig.

*Leofwin.* Tostig, sister, galls himself;  
He cannot smell a rose but pricks his  
nose

Against the thorn, and rails against the  
rose.

*Queen.* I am the only rose of all the  
stock

That never thorn'd him; Edward loves  
him, so

Ye hate him. Harold always hated him.  
Why — how they fought when boys —  
and, Holy Mary!

How Harold used to beat him!

*Harold.* Why, boys will fight.  
Leofwin would often fight me, and I beat  
him.

Even old Gurth would fight. I had much  
ado

To hold mine own against old Gurth.  
Old Gurth,

We fought like great states for grave  
cause; but Tostig —

On a sudden — at a something — for a  
nothing —

The boy would fist me hard, and when  
we fought

I conquer'd, and he loved me none the  
less,

Till thou wouldst get him all apart, and  
tell him

That where he was but worsted, he was  
wrong'd.

Ah! thou hast taught the king to spoil  
him too;

Now the spoilt child sways both. Take  
heed, take heed;

Thou art the Queen; ye are boy and girl  
no more:

Side not with Tostig in any violence,  
Lest thou be sideways guilty of the vio-  
lence.

*Queen.* Come fall not foul on me. I  
leave thee, brother.

*Harold.* Nay, my good sister —  
[*Exeunt Queen, Harold, Gurth, and  
Leofwin.*]

*Aldwyth.* Gamel, son of Orm,  
What thinkest thou this means?

[*Pointing to the comet.*  
*Gamel.* War, my dear lady,  
War, waste, plague, famine, all maligni-  
ties.

*Aldwyth.* It means the fall of Tostig  
from his earldom.

*Gamel.* That were too small a matter  
for a comet!

*Aldwyth.* It means the lifting of the  
house of Alfgar.

*Gamel.* Too small! a comet would  
not show for that!

*Aldwyth.* Not small for thee, if thou  
canst compass it.

*Gamel.* Thy love?

*Aldwyth.* As much as I can give  
thee, man;

This Tostig is, or like to be, a tyrant;  
Stir up thy people: oust him!

*Gamel.* And thy love?

*Aldwyth.* As much as thou canst bear.

*Gamel.* I can bear all,  
And not be giddy.

*Aldwyth.* No more now: to-morrow.

SCENE II. — IN THE GARDEN. THE  
KING'S HOUSE NEAR LONDON. SUN-  
SET.

*Edith.* Mad for thy mate, passionate  
nightingale . . .

I love thee for it — ay, but stay a moment;

*He* can but stay a moment: he is going.  
I fain would hear him coming! . . . near  
me . . . near,  
Somewhere — To draw him nearer with a  
charm  
Like thine to thine.

(*Singing.*)

Love is come with a song and a smile,  
Welcome Love with a smile and a song:  
Love can stay but a little while.  
Why cannot he stay? They call him  
away:  
Ye do him wrong, ye do him wrong;  
Love will stay for a whole life long.

*Enter HAROLD.*

*Harold.* The nightingales in Have-  
ringatte-Bower  
Sang out their loves so loud, that Ed-  
ward's prayers  
Were deafen'd and he pray'd them dumb,  
and thus  
I dumb thee too, my wingless nightingale!

[*Kissing her.*

*Edith.* Thou art my music! Would  
their wings were mine  
To follow thee to Flanders! Must thou  
go?

*Harold.* Not must, but will. It is but  
for one moon.

*Edith.* Leaving so many foes in Ed-  
ward's hall  
To league against thy weal. The Lady  
Aldwyth  
Was here to-day, and when she touch'd  
on thee,  
She stammer'd in her hate; I am sure  
she hates thee,  
Pants for thy blood.

*Harold.* Well, I have given her  
cause —

I fear no woman.

*Edith.* Hate not one who felt  
Some pity for thy hater! I am sure  
Her morning wanted sunlight, she so  
praised  
The convent and lone life — within the  
pale —

Beyond the passion. Nay — she held  
with Edward,

At least methought she held with holy  
Edward,

That marriage was half sin.

*Harold.* A lesson worth  
Finger and thumb — thus (*snaps his fin-  
gers*). And my answer to it —  
See here — an interwoven H and E!  
Take thou this ring; I will demand his  
ward

From Edward when I come again. Ay,  
would she?

She to shut up my blossom in the dark!  
Thou art *my* nun, thy cloister in mine  
arms.

*Edith* (*taking the ring*). Yea, but  
Earl Tostig —

*Harold.* That's a truer fear!  
For if the North take fire, I should be  
back;

I shall be, soon enough.

*Edith.* Ay, but last night  
An evil dream that ever came and went —

*Harold.* A gnat that vex't thy pillow!  
Had I been by,  
I would have spoil'd his horn. My girl,  
what was it?

*Edith.* Oh! that thou wert not going!  
For so methought it was our marriage-  
morn,

And while we stood together, a dead man  
Rose from behind the altar, tore away  
My marriage ring, and rent my bridal  
veil;

And then I turn'd, and saw the church  
all fill'd

With dead men upright from their graves,  
and all

The dead men made at thee to murder  
thee,

But thou didst back thyself against a  
pillar,

And strike among them with thy battle-  
axe —

There, what a dream!

*Harold.* Well, well — a dream —  
no more!

*Edith.* Did not Heaven speak to men  
in dreams of old?

*Harold.* Ay — well — of old. I tell  
thee what, my child;

Thou hast misread this merry dream of  
thine,

Taken the rifted pillars of the wood

For smooth stone columns of the sanctuary,

The shadows of a hundred fat dead deer  
For dead men's ghosts. True, that the  
battle-axe

Was out of place; it should have been  
the bow. —

Come, thou shalt dream no more such  
dreams; I swear it,

By mine own eyes — and these two sap-  
phires — these

Twin rubies, that are amulets against all  
The kisses of all kind of womankind

In Flanders, till the sea shall roll me back  
To tumble at thy feet.

*Edith.* That would but shame me,  
Rather than make me vain. The sea may  
roll

Sand, shingle, shore-weed, not the living  
rock

Which guards the land.

*Harold.* Except it be a soft one,  
And undereaten to the fall. Mine  
amulet . . .

This last . . . upon thine eyelids, to  
shut in

A happier dream. Sleep, sleep, and thou  
shalt see

My greyhounds fleeting like a beam of  
light,

And hear my peregrine and her bells in  
heaven;

And other bells on earth, which yet are  
heaven's;

Guess what they be.

*Edith.* He cannot guess who knows.  
Farewell, my king.

*Harold.* Not yet, but then — my queen.  
[*Exeunt.*]

*Enter ALDWYTH from the thicket.*

*Aldwyth.* The kiss that charms thine  
eyelids into sleep,

Will hold mine waking. Hate him? I  
could love him

More, tenfold, than this fearful child can  
do;

Griffyth I hated: why not hate the foe  
Of England? Griffyth when I saw him  
flee,

Chased deer-like up his mountains, all  
the blood

That should have only pulsed for Griffyth,  
beat

For his pursuer. I love him or think I  
love him.

If he were King of England, I his queen,  
I might be sure of it. Nay, I do love  
him. —

She must be cloister'd somehow, lest the  
king

Should yield his ward to Harold's will.  
What harm?

She hath but blood enough to live, not  
love. —

When Harold goes and Tostig, shall I  
play

The craftier Tostig with him? fawn upon  
him?

Chime in with all? 'O thou more saint  
than king!'

And that were true enough. 'O blessed  
relics!'

'O Holy Peter!' If he found me thus,  
Harold might hate me; he is broad and  
honest,

Breathing an easy gladness . . . not  
like Aldwyth . . .

For which I strangely love him. Should  
not England

Love Aldwyth, if she stay the feuds that  
part

The sons of Godwin from the sons of  
Alfgar

By such a marrying? Courage, noble  
Aldwyth!

Let all thy people bless thee!

Our wild Tostig,  
Edward hath made him Earl: he would  
be king: —

The dog that snapt the shadow, dropt the  
bone. —

I trust he may do well, this Gamel, whom  
I play upon, that he may play the note

Whereat the dog shall howl and run, and  
Harold

Hear the king's music, all alone with  
him,

Pronounced his heir of England.

I see the goal and half the way to it. —  
Peace-lover is our Harold for the sake

Of England's wholeness — so — to shake  
the North

With earthquake and disruption — some  
division —

Then fling mine own fair person in the gap  
A sacrifice to Harold, a peace-offering,  
A scape-goat marriage — all the sins of  
both

The houses on mine head — then a fair  
life

And bless the Queen of England.

*Morcar* (coming from the thicket). Art  
thou assured

By this, that Harold loves but Edith?

*Aldwyth.* *Morcar!*

Why creep'st thou like a timorous beast  
of prey

Out of the bush by night?

*Morcar.* I follow'd thee.

*Aldwyth.* Follow my lead, and I will  
make thee earl.

*Morcar.* What lead then?

*Aldwyth.* Thou shalt flash it secretly  
Among the good Northumbrian folk,  
that I —

That Harold loves me — yea, and pres-  
ently

That I and Harold are betroth'd — and  
last —

Perchance that Harold wrongs me; tho'  
I would not

That it should come to that.

*Morcar.* I will both flash  
And thunder for thee.

*Aldwyth.* I said 'secretly';  
It is the flash that murders, the poor  
thunder

Never harm'd head.

*Morcar.* But thunder may bring down  
That which the flash hath stricken.

*Aldwyth.* Down with Tostig!  
That first of all. — And when doth Harold  
go?

*Morcar.* To-morrow — first to Bosham,  
then to Flanders.

*Aldwyth.* Not to come back till  
Tostig shall have shown  
And redden'd with his people's blood the  
teeth

That shall be broken by us — yea, and  
thou

Chair'd in his place. Good-night, and  
dream thyself

Their chosen Earl. [*Exit Aldwyth.*]

*Morcar.* Earl first, and after that  
Who knows I may not dream myself their  
king!

## ACT II.

SCENE I. — SEASHORE. PONTHEIU.  
NIGHT.

HAROLD and his Men, wrecked.

*Harold.* Friends, in that last inhos-  
pitable plun-  
ge  
Our boat hath burst her ribs; but ours  
are whole;

I have but bark'd my hands.

*Attendant.* I dug mine into  
My old fast friend the shore, and clinging  
thus

Felt the remorseless outdraught of the  
deep

Haul like a great strong fellow at my legs.  
And then I rose and ran. The blast that  
came

So suddenly hath fallen as suddenly —  
Put thou the comet and this blast to-  
gether —

*Harold.* Put thou thyself and mother-  
wit together.

Be not a fool!

(*Enter Fishermen with torches, HAROLD  
going up to one of them, ROLF.*)

Wicked sea-will-o'-the-wisp!  
Wolf of the shore! dog, with thy lying  
lights

Thou hast betray'd us on these rocks of  
thine!

*Rolf.* Ay, but thou liest as loud as the  
black herring-pond behind thee. We be  
fishermen; I came to see after my nets.

*Harold.* To drag us into them.  
Fishermen? devils!

Who, while ye fish for men with your  
false fires,

Let the great Devil fish for your own souls.

*Rolf.* Nay then, we be liker the blessed  
Apostles; they were fishers of men, Father  
Jean says.

*Harold.* I had liefer that the fish had  
swallowed me,

Like Jonah, than have known there were  
such devils.

What's to be done?

[*To his Men — goes apart with them.*]

*Fisherman.* Rolf, what fish did swallow  
Jonah?

*Rolf.* A whale!

*Fisherman.* Then a whale to a whelk we have swallowed the King of England. I saw him over there. Look thee, Rolf, when I was down in the fever, *she* was down with the hunger, and thou didst stand by her and give her thy crabs, and set her up again, till now, by the patient Saints, *she's* as crabb'd as ever.

*Rolf.* And I'll give her my crabs again, when thou art down again.

*Fisherman.* I thank thee, Rolf. Run thou to Count Guy; he is hard at hand. Tell him what hath crept into our creel, and he will fee thee as freely as he will wrench this outlander's ransom out of him — and why not? for what right had he to get himself wrecked on another man's land?

*Rolf.* Thou art the human-heartedest, Christian-charitiest of all crab-catchers. Share and share alike! [*Exit.*]

*Harold* (to *Fisherman*). Fellow, dost thou catch crabs?

*Fisherman.* As few as I may in a wind, and less than I would in a calm. Ay!

*Harold.* I have a mind that thou shalt catch no more.

*Fisherman.* How?

*Harold.* I have a mind to brain thee with mine axe.

*Fisherman.* Ay, do, do, and our great Count crab will make his nippers meet in thine heart; he'll sweat it out of thee, he'll sweat it out of thee. Look, he's here! He'll speak for himself! Hold thine own, if thou canst!

*Enter GUY, COUNT OF PONTHEIU.*

*Harold.* Guy, Count of Ponthieu?

*Guy.* Harold, Earl of Wessex!

*Harold.* Thy villains with their lying lights have wreck'd us!

*Guy.* Art thou not Earl of Wessex?

*Harold.* In mine earldom

A man may hang gold bracelets on a bush,  
And leave them for a year, and coming back  
Find them again.

*Guy.* Thou art a mighty man  
In thine own earldom!

*Harold.* Were such murderous liars  
In Wessex — if I caught them, they  
should hang

Cliff-gibbeted for sea-marks; our sea-mew  
Winging their only wail!

*Guy.* Ay, but my men  
Hold that the shipwreckt are accursed of  
God; —

What hinders me to hold with mine own  
men?

*Harold.* The Christian manhood of  
the man who reigns!

*Guy.* Ay, rave thy worst, but in our  
oubliettes

Thou shalt or rot or ransom. Hale him  
hence! [*To one of his Attendants.*]

Fly thou to William; tell him we have  
Harold.

## SCENE II. — BAYEUX. PALACE.

COUNT WILLIAM and WILLIAM MALET.

*William.* We hold our Saxon wood-  
cock in the springe,  
But he begins to flutter. As I think  
He was thine host in England when I  
went

To visit Edward.

*Malet.* Yea, and there, my lord,  
To make allowance for their rougher  
fashions,

I found him all a noble host should be.

*William.* Thou art his friend: thou  
know'st my claim on England

Thro' Edward's promise: we have him  
in the toils.

And it were well, if thou shouldst let him  
feel

How dense a fold of danger nets him  
round,

So that he bristle himself against my will.

*Malet.* What would I do, my lord, if  
I were you?

*William.* What wouldst thou do?

*Malet.* My lord, he is thy guest.

*William.* Nay, by the splendour of  
God, no guest of mine.

He came not to see me, had past me by  
To hunt and hawk elsewhere, save for  
the fate

Which hunted *him* when that un-Saxon  
blast,

And bolts of thunder moulded in high  
 heaven  
 To serve the Norman purpose, drave and  
 crack'd  
 His boat on Ponthieu beach; where our  
 friend Guy  
 Had wrung his ransom from him by the  
 rack,  
 But that I stept between and purchased  
 him,  
 Translating his captivity from Guy  
 To mine own hearth at Bayeux, where he  
 sits  
 My ransom'd prisoner.

*Malet.* Well, if not with gold,  
 With golden deeds and iron strokes that  
 brought  
 Thy war with Brittany to a goodlier close  
 Than else had been, he paid his ransom  
 back.

*William.* So that henceforth they are  
 not like to league  
 With Harold against me.

*Malet.* A marvel, how  
 He from the liquid sands of Coesnon  
 Haled thy shore-swallow'd, armour'd  
 Normans up  
 To fight for thee again!

*William.* Perchance against  
 Their saver, save thou save him from  
 himself.

*Malet.* But I should let him home  
 again, my lord.

*William.* Simple! let fly the bird  
 within the hand,  
 To catch the bird again within the bush!  
 No.

Smooth thou my way, before he clash  
 with me;

I want his voice in England for the  
 crown,

I want thy voice with him to bring him  
 round;

And being brave he must be subtly cow'd,  
 And being truthful wrought upon to swear  
 Vows that he dare not break. England  
 our own

Thro' Harold's help, he shall be my dear  
 friend

As well as thine, and thou thyself shalt  
 have

Large lordship there of lands and territory.

*Malet.* I knew thy purpose; he and  
 Wulfnoth never  
 Have met, except in public; shall they  
 meet

In private? I have often talk'd with  
 Wulfnoth,

And stuff'd the boy with fears that these  
 may act

On Harold when they meet.

*William.* Then let them meet!

*Malet.* I can but love this noble,  
 honest Harold.

*William.* Love him! why not? thine  
 is a loving office,

I have commission'd thee to save the  
 man:

Help the good ship, showing the sunken  
 rock,

Or he is wreckt for ever.

*Enter WILLIAM RUFUS.*

*William Rufus.* Father.

*William.* Well, boy.

*William Rufus.* They have taken  
 away the toy thou gavest me,  
 The Norman knight.

*William.* Why, boy?

*William Rufus.* Because I broke  
 The horse's leg—it was mine own to  
 break;

I like to have my toys, and break them  
 too.

*William.* Well, thou shalt have an-  
 other Norman knight!

*William Rufus.* And may I break  
 his legs?

*William.* Yea,—get thee gone!

*William Rufus.* I'll tell them I have  
 had my way with thee. [*Exit.*]

*Malet.* I never knew thee check thy  
 will for aught

Save for the prattling of thy little ones.

*William.* Who shall be kings of  
 England. I am heir

Of England by the promise of her king.

*Malet.* But there the great Assembly  
 choose their king,

The choice of England is the voice of  
 England.

*William.* I will be king of England  
 by the laws,

The choice, and voice of England.

*Malet.* Can that be?



*William.* The voice of any people is  
the sword  
That guards them, or the sword that beats  
them down.  
Here comes the would-be what I will  
be . . . kinglike . . .  
Tho' scarce at ease; for, save our meshes  
break,  
More kinglike he than like to prove a  
king.

(*Enter HAROLD, musing, with his eyes  
on the ground.*)

He sees me not — and yet he dreams of  
me.  
Earl, wilt thou fly my falcons this fair  
day?  
They are of the best, strong-wing'd against  
the wind.

*Harold (looking up suddenly, having  
caught but the last word).* Which  
way does it blow?

*William.* Blowing for England, ha?  
Not yet. Thou hast not learnt thy quar-  
ters here.  
The winds so cross and jostle among  
these towers.

*Harold.* Count of the Normans, thou  
hast ransom'd us,  
Maintain'd, and entertain'd us royally!

*William.* And thou for us hast fought  
as loyally,

Which binds us friendship-fast for ever!  
*Harold.* Good!

But lest we turn the scale of courtesy  
By too much pressure on it, I would fain,  
Since thou hast promised Wulfnoth home  
with us,

Be home again with Wulfnoth.

*William.* Stay — as yet  
Thou hast but seen how Norman hands  
can strike,

But walk'd our Norman field, scarce  
touch'd or tasted

The splendours of our Court.

*Harold.* I am in no mood:  
I should be as the shadow of a cloud  
Crossing your light.

*William.* Nay, rest a week or two,  
And we will fill thee full of Norman sun,  
And send thee back among thine island  
mists  
With laughter.

*Harold.* Count, I thank thee, but  
had rather  
Breathe the free wind from off our Saxon  
downs,  
Tho' charged with all the wet of all the  
west.

*William.* Why if thou wilt, so let it  
be — thou shalt.  
That were a graceless hospitality  
To chain the free guest to the banquet-  
board;

To-morrow we will ride with thee to  
Harfleur,  
And see thee shipt, and pray in thy behalf  
For happier homeward winds than that  
which crack'd.

Thy bark at Ponthieu, — yet to us, in faith,  
A happy one — whereby we came to know  
Thy valour and thy value, noble earl.  
Ay, and perchance a happy one for thee,  
Provided — I will go with thee to-mor-  
row —

Nay — but there be conditions, easy  
ones,  
So thou, fair friend, will take them easily.

*Enter PAGE.*

*Page.* My lord, there is a post from  
over seas

With news for thee. [*Exit Page.*]

*William.* Come, Malet, let us hear!  
[*Excunt Count William and Malet.*]

*Harold.* Conditions? What condi-  
tions? pay him back

His ransom? 'easy' — that were easy —  
nay —

No money-lover he! What said the  
King?

'I pray you do not go to Normandy.'  
And fate hath blown me hither, bound  
me too

With bitter obligation to the Count —  
Have I not fought it out? What did he  
mean?

There lodged a gleaming grimness in his  
eyes,

Gave his shorn smile the lie. The walls  
oppress me,

And yon huge keep that hinders half the  
heaven.

Free air! free field!

[*Moves to go out. A Man-at-arms  
follows him.*]

*Harold (to the Man-at-arms).* I need thee not. Why dost thou follow me?

*Man-at-arms.* I have the Count's commands to follow thee.

*Harold.* What then? Am I in danger in this court?

*Man-at-arms.* I cannot tell. I have the Count's commands.

*Harold.* Stand out of earshot then, and keep me still

In eyeshot.

*Man-at-arms.* Yea, lord Harold.

[*Withdraws.*]

*Harold.* And arm'd men

Ever keep watch beside my chamber door,  
And if I walk within the lonely wood,  
There is an arm'd man ever glides behind!

(*Enter MALET.*)

Why am I follow'd, haunted, harass'd,  
watch'd?

See yonder!

[*Pointing to the Man-at-arms.*]

*Malet.* 'Tis the good Count's care for thee!

The Normans love thee not, nor thou the Normans,

Or — so they deem.

*Harold.* But wherefore is the wind,  
Which way soever the vane-arrow swing,  
Not ever fair for England? Why but now

He said (thou heardest him) that I must not hence

Save on conditions.

*Malet.* So in truth he said.

*Harold.* Malet, thy mother was an Englishwoman;

There somewhere beats an English pulse in thee!

*Malet.* Well — for my mother's sake I love your England,

But for my father I love Normandy.

*Harold.* Speak for thy mother's sake, and tell me true.

*Malet.* Then for my mother's sake, and England's sake

That suffers in the daily want of thee,  
Obey the Count's conditions, my good friend.

*Harold.* How, Malet, if they be not honourable!

*Malet.* Seem to obey them.

*Harold.* Better die than lie!

*Malet.* Choose therefore whether thou wilt have thy conscience

White as a maiden's hand, or whether England

Be shatter'd into fragments.

*Harold.* News from England?

*Malet.* Morcar and Edwin have stirr'd up the Thanes

Against thy brother Tostig's governance;  
And all the North of Humber is one storm.

*Harold.* I should be there, Malet, I should be there!

*Malet.* And Tostig in his own hall on suspicion

Hath massacred the Thane that was his guest,

Gamel, the son of Orm: and there be more As villainously slain.

*Harold.* The wolf! the beast!

Ill news for guests, ha, Malet! More? What more?

What do they say? did Edward know of this?

*Malet.* They say his wife was knowing and abetting.

*Harold.* They say, his wife! — To marry and have no husband  
Makes the wife fool. My God, I should be there.

I'll hack my way to the sea.

*Malet.* Thou canst not, Harold;  
Our Duke is all between thee and the sea,

Our Duke is all about thee like a God;  
All passes block'd. Obey him, speak

him fair,

For he is only debonair to those  
That follow where he leads, but stark as

death

To those that cross him. — Look thou, here is Wulfnoth!

I leave thee to thy talk with him alone;  
How wan, poor lad! how sick and sad

for home! [*Exit Malet.*]

*Harold (muttering).* Go not to Normandy — go not to Normandy!

(*Enter WULFNOTH.*)

Poor brother! still a hostage!  
*Wulfnoth.* Yea, and I

Shall see the dewy kiss of dawn no more  
Make blush the maiden-white of our tall  
cliffs,

Nor mark the sea-bird rouse himself and  
hover

Above the windy ripple, and fill the sky  
With free sea-laughter — never — save  
indeed

Thou canst make yield this iron-mooded  
Duke

To let me go.

*Harold.* Why, brother, so he will;  
But on conditions. Canst thou guess at  
them?

*Wulfnoth.* Draw nearer, — I was in  
the corridor,  
I saw him coming with his brother Odo  
The Bayeux bishop, and I hid myself.

*Harold.* They did thee wrong who  
made thee hostage; thou  
Wast ever fearful.

*Wulfnoth.* And he spoke — I  
heard him —

'This Harold is not of the royal blood,  
Can have no right to the crown,' and  
Odo said,

'Thine is the right, for thine the might;  
he is here,

And yonder is thy keep.'

*Harold.* No, Wulfnoth, no.

*Wulfnoth.* And William laugh'd and  
swore that might was right,  
Far as he knew in this poor world of  
ours —

'Marry, the Saints must go along with  
us,

And, brother, we will find a way,' said  
he —

Yea, yea, he would be king of England.

*Harold.* Never!

*Wulfnoth.* Yea, but thou must not this  
way answer him.

*Harold.* Is it not better still to speak  
the truth?

*Wulfnoth.* Not here, or thou wilt  
never hence nor I:

For in the racing toward this golden  
goal

He turns not right or left, but tramples  
flat

Whatever thwarts him; hast thou never  
heard

His savagery at Alençon — the town

Hung out raw hides along their walls,  
and cried,

'Work for the tanner.'

*Harold.* That had anger'd me  
Had I been William.

*Wulfnoth.* Nay, but he had prisoners,  
He tore their eyes out, sliced their hands  
away,

And flung them streaming o'er the battle-  
ments

Upon the heads of those who walk'd  
within —

Oh, speak him fair, Harold, for thine own  
sake.

*Harold.* Your Welshman says, 'The  
Truth against the World,'

Much more the truth against myself.

*Wulfnoth.* Thyself?  
But for my sake, O brother! oh! for  
my sake!

*Harold.* Poor Wulfnoth! do they not  
entreat thee well?

*Wulfnoth.* I see the blackness of my  
dungeon loom

Across their lamps of revel, and beyond  
The merriest murmurs of their banquet  
clank

The shackles that will bind me to the  
wall.

*Harold.* Too fearful still!

*Wulfnoth.* Oh no, no — speak  
him fair!

Call it to temporise; and not to lie;  
Harold, I do not counsel thee to lie.  
The man that hath to foil a murderous aim  
May, surely, play with words.

*Harold.* Words are the man.  
Not ev'n for thy sake, brother, would I  
lie.

*Wulfnoth.* Then for thine Edith?

*Harold.* There thou prick'st me  
deep.

*Wulfnoth.* And for our Mother Eng-  
land?

*Harold.* Deeper still.

*Wulfnoth.* And deeper still the deep-  
down oubliette,

Down thirty feet below the smiling day —  
In blackness — dogs' food thrown upon  
thy head.

And over thee the suns arise and set,  
And the lark sings, the sweet stars come  
and go,

And men are at their markets, in their fields,  
And woo their loves and have forgotten thee;

And thou art upright in thy living grave,  
Where there is barely room to shift thy side,  
And all thine England hath forgotten thee;  
And he our lazy-pious Norman King,  
With all his Normans round him once again,

Counts his old beads, and hath forgotten thee.

*Harold.* Thou art of my blood, and so methinks, my boy,  
Thy fears infect me beyond reason.  
Peace!

*Wulfnoth.* And then our fiery Tostig,  
while thy hands  
Are palsied here, if his Northumbrians rise  
And hurl him from them, — I have heard  
the Normans

Count upon this confusion — may he not make  
A league with William, so to bring him back?

*Harold.* That lies within the shadow of the chance.

*Wulfnoth.* And like a river in flood thro' a burst dam  
Descends the ruthless Norman—our good King  
Kneels mumbling some old bone—our helpless folk  
Are wash'd away, wailing, in their own blood—

*Harold.* Wailing! not warring? Boy, thou hast forgotten  
That thou art English.

*Wulfnoth.* Then our modest women — I know the Norman license — thine own Edith —

*Harold.* No more! I will not hear thee — William comes.

*Wulfnoth.* I dare not well be seen in talk with thee.  
Make thou not mention that I spake with thee.

[*Moves away to the back of the stage.*]

Enter WILLIAM, MALET, and OFFICER.

*Officer.* We have the man that rail'd against thy birth.

*William.* Tear out his tongue.

*Officer.* He shall not rail again.  
He said that he should see confusion fall

On thee and on thine house.

*William.* Tear out his eyes,  
And plunge him into prison.

*Officer.* It shall be done.  
[*Exit Officer.*]

*William.* Look not amazed, fair earl!  
Better leave undone  
Than do by halves — tongueless and eyeless,  
prison'd —

*Harold.* Better methinks have slain the man at once!

*William.* We have respect for man's immortal soul,  
We seldom take man's life, except in war;

It frights the traitor more to maim and blind.

*Harold.* In mine own land I should have scorn'd the man,  
Or lash'd his rascal back, and let him go.

*William.* And let him go? To slander thee again!

Yet in thine own land in thy father's day  
They blinded my young kinsman, Alfred — ay,

Some said it was thy father's deed.

*Harold.* They lied.  
*William.* But thou and he — whom

at thy word, for thou  
Art known a speaker of the truth, I free  
From this foul charge —

*Harold.* Nay, nay, he freed himself  
By oath and compurgation from the charge.

The king, the lords, the people clear'd him of it.

*William.* But thou and he drove our good Normans out  
From England, and this rankles in us yet.  
Archbishop Robert hardly scaped with life.

*Harold.* Archbishop Robert! Robert the Archbishop!

Robert of Jumièges, he that —

*Malet.* Quiet! quiet!

*Harold.* Count! if there sat within the Norman chair  
A ruler all for England — one who fill'd  
All offices, all bishopricks with English —

We could not move from Dover to the  
Humber

Saving thro' Norman bishopricks — I say  
Ye would applaud that Norman who  
should drive

The stranger to the fiends!

*William.* Why, that is reason!  
Warrior thou art, and mighty wise withal!  
Ay, ay, but many among our Norman  
lords

Hate thee for this, and press upon me —  
saying

God and the sea have given thee to our  
hands —

To plunge thee into life-long prison  
here: —

Yet I hold out against them, as I may,  
Yea — would hold out, yea, tho' they  
should revolt —

For thou hast done the battle in my  
cause;

I am thy fastest friend in Normandy.

*Harold.* I am doubly bound to thee  
. . . if this be so.

*William.* And I would bind thee  
more, and would myself

Be bounden to thee more.

*Harold.* Then let me hence  
With Wulfnoth to King Edward.

*William.* So we will.

We hear he hath not long to live.

*Harold.* It may be.

*William.* Why then the heir of Eng-  
land, who is he?

*Harold.* The Atheling is nearest to  
the throne.

*William.* But sickly, slight, half-  
witted and a child,

Will England have him king?

*Harold.* It may be, no.

*William.* And hath King Edward  
not pronounced his heir?

*Harold.* Not that I know.

*William.* When he was here  
in Normandy,

He loved us and we him, because we  
found him

A Norman of the Normans.

*Harold.* So did we.

*William.* A gentle, gracious, pure  
and saintly man!

And grateful to the hand that shielded  
him,

He promised that if ever he were king  
In England, he would give his kingly  
voice

To me as his successor. Knowest thou  
this?

*Harold.* I learn it now.

*William.* Thou knowest I am his  
cousin,

And that my wife descends from Alfred?

*Harold.* Ay.

*William.* Who hath a better claim  
then to the crown

So that ye will not crown the Atheling?

*Harold.* None that I know . . . if  
that but hung upon

King Edward's will.

*William.* Wilt thou uphold my claim?  
*Malet (aside to Harold).* Be careful  
of thine answer, my good friend.

*Wulfnoth (aside to Harold).* Oh!  
Harold, for my sake and for thine  
own!

*Harold.* Ay . . . if the king have  
not revoked his promise.

*William.* But hath he done it then?

*Harold.* Not that I know.

*William.* Good, good, and thou wilt  
help me to the crown?

*Harold.* Ay . . . if the Witan will  
consent to this.

*William.* Thou art the mightiest voice  
in England, man,

Thy voice will lead the Witan — shall I  
have it?

*Wulfnoth (aside to Harold).* Oh!  
Harold, if thou love thine Edith,  
ay.

*Harold.* Ay, if —

*Malet (aside to Harold).* Thine 'ifs'  
will sear thine eyes out — ay.

*William.* I ask thee, wilt thou help  
me to the crown?

And I will make thee my great Earl of  
Earls,

Foremost in England and in Normandy;  
Thou shalt be verily king — all but the  
name —

For I shall most sojourn in Normandy;  
And thou be my vice-king in England.  
Speak.

*Wulfnoth (aside to Harold).* Ay,  
brother — for the sake of England  
— ay.

*Harold.* My lord —

*Malet (aside to Harold).* Take heed now.

*Harold.* Ay.

*William.* I am content,  
For thou art truthful, and thy word thy bond.

To-morrow will we ride with thee to Harfleur. [*Exit William.*]

*Malet.* Harold, I am thy friend, one life with thee,

And even as I should bless thee saving mine,

I thank thee now for having saved thyself. [*Exit Malet.*]

*Harold.* For having lost myself to save myself,

Said 'ay' when I meant 'no,' lied like a lad

That dreads the pendent scourge, said 'ay' for 'no'!

Ay! No! — he hath not bound me by an oath —

Is 'ay' an oath? is 'ay' strong as an oath?

Or is it the same sin to break my word  
As break mine oath? He call'd my word my bond!

He is a liar who knows I am a liar,  
And makes believe that he believes my word —

The crime be on his head — not bounden — no.

[*Suddenly doors are flung open, discovering in an inner hall COUNT WILLIAM in his state robes, seated upon his throne, between two Bishops, ODO OF BAYEUX being one: in the centre of the hall an ark covered with cloth of gold; and on either side of it the Norman barons.*]

*Enter a JAILOR before William's throne.*

*William (to Jailer).* Knave, hast thou let thy prisoner scape?

*Jailer.* Sir Count,  
He had but one foot, he must have hopt away,

Yea, some familiar spirit must have help'd him.

*William.* Woe knave to thy familiar and to thee!

Give me thy keys. [*They fall clashing.*]

Nay let them lie. Stand there and wait my will.

[*The Jailer stands aside.*  
*William (to Harold).* Hast thou such trustless jailors in thy North?

*Harold.* We have few prisoners in mine earldom there,  
So less chance for false keepers.

*William.* We have heard  
Of thy just, mild, and equal governance;  
Honour to thee! thou art perfect in all honour!

Thy naked word thy bond! confirm it now

Before our gather'd Norman baronage,  
For they will not believe thee — as I believe.

[*Descends from his throne and stands by the ark.*]

Let all men here bear witness of our bond!

[*Beckons to Harold, who advances.*]

(*Enter MALET behind him.*)

Lay thou thy hand upon this golden pall!

Behold the jewel of St. Pancratus  
Woven into the gold. Swear thou on this!

*Harold.* What should I swear? Why should I swear on this?

*William (savagely).* Swear thou to help me to the crown of England.

*Malet (whispering Harold).* My friend, thou hast gone too far to palter now.

*Wulfnoth (whispering Harold).* Swear thou to-day, to-morrow is thine own.

*Harold.* I swear to help thee to the crown of England . . .

According as King Edward promises.

*William.* Thou must sweat absolutely, noble Earl.

*Malet (whispering).* Delay is death to thee, ruin to England.

*Wulfnoth (whispering).* Swear, dearest brother, I beseech thee, swear!

*Harold (putting his hand on the jewel).* I swear to help thee to the crown of England.

*William.* Thanks, truthful Earl; I did not doubt thy word,



But that my barons might believe thy word,

And that the Holy Saints of Normandy  
When thou art home in England, with  
thine own,

Might strengthen thee in keeping of thy word,

I made thee swear.—Show him by  
whom he hath sworn.

[*The two Bishops advance, and raise the cloth of gold. The bodies and bones of saints are seen lying in the ark.*]

The holy bones of all the Canonised  
From all the holiest shrines in Normandy!

*Harold.* Horrible! [*They let the cloth fall again.*]

*William.* Ay, for thou hast sworn an oath

Which, if not kept, would make the  
hard earth rive

To the very Devil's horns, the bright sky  
cleave

To the very feet of God, and send her  
hosts

Of injured Saints to scatter sparks of  
plague

Thro' all your cities, blast your infants,  
dash

The torch of war among your standing  
corn,

Dabble your hearths with your own blood.  
— Enough!

Thou wilt not break it! I, the Count —  
the King —

Thy friend — am grateful for thine honest  
oath,

Not coming fiercely like a conqueror, now,  
But softly as a bridegroom to his own.

For I shall rule according to your laws,  
And make your ever-jarring Earldoms  
move

To music and in order — Angle, Jute,  
Dane, Saxon, Norman, help to build a  
throne

Out-towering hers of France. . . . The  
wind is fair

For England now. . . . To-night we  
will be merry.

To-morrow will I ride with thee to Har-  
fleur.

[*Exeunt William and all the Norman barons, etc.*]

*Harold.* To-night we will be merry —  
and to-morrow —

Juggler and bastard — bastard — he hates  
that most —

William the tanner's bastard! Would  
he heard me!

O God, that I were in some wide, waste  
field

With nothing but my battle-axe and  
him

To spatter his brains! Why let earth  
rive, gulf in

These cursed Normans — yea and mine  
own self.

Cleave heaven, and send thy saints that  
I may say

Ev'n to their faces, 'If ye side with  
William

Ye are not noble.' How their pointed  
fingers

Glared at me! Am I Harold, Harold,  
son

Of our great Godwin? Lo! I touch  
mine arms,

My limbs — they are not mine — they  
are a liar's —

I mean to be a liar — I am not bound —  
Stigand shall give me absolution for  
it —

Did the chest move? did it move? I  
am utter craven!

O Wulfnoth, Wulfnoth, brother, thou  
hast betray'd me!

*Wulfnoth.* Forgive me, brother, I  
will live here and die.

*Enter PAGE.*

*Page.* My lord! the Duke awaits  
thee at the banquet.

*Harold.* Where they eat dead men's  
flesh, and drink their blood.

*Page.* My lord —

*Harold.* I know your Norman cook-  
ery is so spiced,

It masks all this.

*Page.* My lord! thou art  
white as death.

*Harold.* With looking on the dead.  
Am I so white?

Thy duke will seem the darker. Hence,  
I follow. [*Exeunt.*]

## ACT III.

SCENE I. — THE KING'S PALACE.  
LONDON.

KING EDWARD *dying on a couch, and by him standing the QUEEN, HAROLD, ARCHBISHOP STIGAND, GURTH, LEOFWIN, ARCHBISHOP ALDRED, ALDWYTH, and EDITH.*

*Stigand.* Sleeping or dying there?

If this be death,

Then our great council wait to crown thee king —

Come hither, I have a power;

[*To Harold.*

They call me near, for I am close to thee  
And England — I, old shrivell'd Stigand,  
I,

Dry as an old wood-fungus on a dead tree.

I have a power!

See here this little key about my neck!

There lies a treasure buried down in Ely:

If e'er the Norman grow too hard for thee,

Ask me for this at thy most need, son Harold,

At thy most need — not sooner.

*Harold.* So I will.

*Stigand.* Red gold — a hundred purses — yea, and more!

If thou canst make a wholesome use of these

To chink against the Norman, I do believe

My old crook'd spine would bud out two young wings

To fly to heaven straight with.

*Harold.* Thank thee, father!

Thou art English, Edward too is English now,

He hath clean repented of his Normanism.

*Stigand.* Ay, as the libertine repents who cannot

Make done undone, when thro' his dying sense

Shrills 'lost thro' thee.' They have built their castles here;

Our priories are Norman; the Norman adder

Hath bitten us; we are poison'd: our dear England

Is demi-Norman. He! —

[*Pointing to King Edward, sleeping.*

*Harold.* I would I were

As holy and as passionless as he!

That I might rest as calmly! Look at him —

The rosy face, and long down-silvering beard,

The brows unwrinkled as a summer mere. —

*Stigand.* A summer mere with sudden wreckful gusts

From a side-gorge. Passionless? How he flamed

When Tostig's anger'd earldom flung him, nay,

He fain had calcined all Northumbria To one black ash, but that thy patriot

passion Siding with our great Council against

Tostig, Out-passion'd his! Holy? ay, ay, for-

sooth, A conscience for his own soul, not his

realm; A twilight conscience lighted thro' a

chink; Thine by the sun; nay, by some sun to be,

When all the world hath learnt to speak the truth,

And lying were self-murder by that state Which was the exception.

*Harold.* That sun may God speed!

*Stigand.* Come, Harold, shake the cloud off!

*Harold.* Can I, father?

Our Tostig parted cursing me and Eng-

land; Our sister hates us for his banishment;

He hath gone to kindle Norway against England,

And Wulfnoth is alone in Normandy. For when I rode with William down to

Harfleur, 'Wulfnoth is sick,' he said; 'he cannot

follow;' Then with that friendly-fiendly smile of

his, 'We have learnt to love him, let him a little longer

Remain a hostage for the loyalty

Of Godwin's house.' As far as touches  
Wulfnoth

I that so prized plain word and naked  
truth

Have sinn'd against it—all in vain.

*Leofwin.* Good brother,

By all the truths that ever priest hath  
preach'd,

Of all the lies that ever men have lied,

This is the pardonablest.

*Harold.* May be so!

I think it so, I think I am a fool

To think it can be otherwise than so.

*Stigand.* Tut, tut, I have absolved

thee: dost thou scorn me,

Because I had my Canterbury pallium,

From one whom they dispoed?

*Harold.* No, Stigand, no!

*Stigand.* Is naked truth actable in  
true life?

I have heard a saying of thy father  
Godwin,

That, were a man of state nakedly true,  
Men would but take him for the craftier  
liar.

*Leofwin.* Be men less delicate than  
the Devil himself?

I thought that naked Truth would shame  
the Devil

The Devil is so modest.

*Gurth.* He never said it!

*Leofwin.* Be thou not stupid-honest,  
brother Gurth!

*Harold.* Better to be a liar's dog, and  
hold

My master honest, than believe that  
lying

And ruling men are fatal twins that  
cannot

Move one without the other. Edward  
wakes! —

Dazed — he hath seen a vision.

*Edward.* The green tree!

Then a great Angel past along the highest  
Crying 'the doom of England,' and at  
once

He stood beside me, in his grasp a sword  
Of lightnings, wherewithal he cleft the  
tree

From off the bearing trunk, and hurl'd it  
from him

Three fields away, and then he dash'd  
and drench'd,

He dyed, he soak'd the trunk with  
human blood,

And brought the sunder'd tree again,  
and set it

Straight on the trunk, that thus baptized  
in blood

Grew ever high and higher, beyond my  
seeing,

And shot out sidelong boughs across the  
deep

That dropt themselves, and rooted in far  
isles

Beyond my seeing: and the great Angel  
rose

And past again along the highest crying  
'The doom of England!' — Tostig, raise

my head! [*Falls back senseless.*]

*Harold (raising him).* Let Harold  
serve for Tostig!

*Queen.* Harold served

Tostig so ill, he cannot serve for Tostig!

Ay, raise his head, for thou hast laid it low!

The sickness of our saintly king, for  
whom

My prayers go up as fast as my tears fall,  
I well believe, hath mainly drawn itself

From lack of Tostig — thou hast banish'd  
him.

*Harold.* Nay — but the council, and  
the king himself.

*Queen.* Thou hatest him, hatest him.  
*Harold (coldly).* Ay — Stigand,  
unriddle

This vision, canst thou?  
*Stigand.* Dotage!

*Edward (starting up).* It is finish'd.  
I have built the Lord a house — the Lord

hath dwelt  
In darkness. I have built the Lord a  
house —

Palms, flowers, pomegranates, golden  
cherubim

With twenty-cubit wings from wall to  
wall —

I have built the Lord a house — sing,  
Asaph! clash

The cymbal, Heman! blow the trumpet,  
priest!

Fall, cloud, and fill the house — lo! my  
two pillars,

Jachin and Boaz! —  
[*Seeing Harold and Gurth.*  
Harold, Gurth, — where am I?

Where is the charter of our Westminster?

*Stigand.* It lies beside thee, king,  
upon thy bed.

*Edward.* Sign, sign at once—take,  
sign it, Stigand, Aldred!

Sign it, my good son Harold, Gurth, and  
Leofwin,

Sign it, my queen!

*All.* We have sign'd it.

*Edward.* It is finish'd!

The kingliest Abbey in all Christian  
lands,

The lordliest, loftiest minster ever built

To Holy Peter in our English isle!

Let me be buried there, and all our kings,

And all our just and wise and holy men

That shall be born hereafter. It is  
finish'd!

Hast thou had absolution for thine oath?

[To Harold.

*Harold.* Stigand hath given me abso-  
lution for it.

*Edward.* Stigand is not canonical  
enough

To save thee from the wrath of Norman  
Saints.

*Stigand.* Norman enough! Be there  
no Saints of England

To help us from their brethren yonder?

*Edward.* Prelate,

The Saints are one, but those of Norman-  
land

Are mightier than our own. Ask it of

Aldred. [To Harold.

*Aldred.* It shall be granted him, my  
king; for he

Who vows a vow to strangle his own  
mother

Is guiltier keeping this, than breaking it.

*Edward.* O friends, I shall not over-  
live the day.

*Stigand.* Why then the throne is  
empty. Who inherits?

For tho' we be not bound by the king's  
voice

In making of a king, yet the king's  
voice

Is much toward his making. Who  
inherits?

Edgar the Atheling?

*Edward.* No, no, but Harold.

I love him: he hath served me: none  
but he

Can rule all England. Yet the curse is  
on him

For swearing falsely by those blessed  
bones;

He did not mean to keep his vow.

*Harold.* Not mean

To make our England Norman.

*Edward.* There spake Godwin,  
Who hated all the Normans; but their

Saints

Have heard thee, Harold.

*Edith.* O my lord, my king!

He knew not whom he sware by.

*Edward.* Yea, I know

He knew not, but those heavenly ears  
have heard,

Their curse is on him; wilt thou bring  
another,

Edith, upon his head?

*Edith.* No, no, not I.

*Edward.* Why then, thou must not  
wed him.

*Harold.* Wherefore, wherefore?

*Edward.* O son, when thou didst tell  
me of thine oath,

I sorrow'd for my random promise given

To yon fox-lion. I did not dream then

I should be king.— My son, the Saints  
are virgins;

They love the white rose of virginity,

The cold, white lily blowing in her cell:

I have been myself a virgin; and I  
sware

To consecrate my virgin here to heaven—

The silent, cloister'd, solitary life,

A life of life-long prayer against the curse  
That lies on thee and England.

*Harold.* No, no, no.

*Edward.* Treble denial of the tongue  
of flesh,

Like Peter's when he fell, and thou wilt  
have

To wail for it like Peter. O my son!

Are all oaths to be broken then, all  
promises

Made in our agony for help from heaven?

Son, there is one who loves thee: and a  
wife,

What matters who, so she be serviceable

In all obedience, as mine own hath been:

God bless thee, wedded daughter.

[Laying his hand on the Queen's head.

*Queen.* Bless thou too

That brother whom I love beyond the  
rest,  
My banish'd Tostig.

*Edward.* All the sweet Saints  
bless him!

Spare and forbear him, Harold, if he  
comes!

And let him pass unscathed; he loves  
me, Harold!

Be kindly to the Normans left among us,  
Who follow'd me for love! and dear son,  
swear

When thou art king, to see my solemn  
vow

Accomplish'd.

*Harold.* Nay, dear lord, for I have  
sworn

Not to swear falsely twice.

*Edward.* Thou wilt not swear?

*Harold.* I cannot.

*Edward.* Then on thee remains  
the curse,

Harold, if thou embrace her: and on thee,  
Edith, if thou abide it,—

[*The King swoons; Edith falls and  
kneels by the couch.*]

*Stigand.* He hath swoon'd!  
Death? . . . no, as yet a breath.

*Harold.* Look up! look up!  
Edith!

*Aldred.* Confuse her not; she hath  
begun

Her life-long prayer for thee.

*Aldwyth.* O noble Harold,  
I would thou couldst have sworn.

*Harold.* For thine own pleasure?

*Aldwyth.* No, but to please our dying  
king, and those

Who make thy good their own — all  
England, Earl.

*Aldred.* I would thou couldst have  
sworn. Our holy king

Hath given his virgin lamb to Holy  
Church'

To save thee from the curse.

*Harold.* Alas! poor man,  
*His* promise brought it on me.

*Aldred.* O good son!  
That knowledge made him all the care-  
fuller

To find a means whereby the curse might  
glance

From thee and England.

*Harold.* Father, we so loved —  
*Aldred.* The more the love, the  
mightier is the prayer;

The more the love, the more acceptable  
The sacrifice of both your loves to  
heaven.

No sacrifice to heaven, no help from  
heaven;

That runs thro' all the faiths of all the  
world.

And sacrifice there must be, for the king  
Is holy, and hath talk'd with God, and  
seen

A shadowing horror; there are signs in  
heaven —

*Harold.* Your comet came and went.

*Aldred.* And signs on earth!

Knowest thou Senlac hill?

*Harold.* I know all Sussex;

A good entrenchment for a perilous  
hour!

*Aldred.* Pray God that come not  
suddenly! There is one

Who passing by that hill three nights  
ago —

He shook so that he scarce could out  
with it —

Heard, heard —

*Harold.* The wind in his hair?

*Aldred.* A ghostly horn  
Blowing continually, and faint battle-  
hymns,

And cries, and clashes, and the groans of  
men;

And dreadful shadows strove upon the  
hill,

And dreadful lights crept up from out  
the marsh —

Corpse-candles gliding over nameless  
graves —

*Harold.* At Senlac?

*Aldred.* Senlac.

*Edward* (*waking*). Senlac! Sanguelac,  
The Lake of Blood!

*Stigand.* This lightning before death  
Plays on the word, — and Normanises  
too!

*Harold.* Hush, father, hush!

*Edward.* Thou uncanonical fool,  
Wilt thou play with the thunder? North  
and South

Thunder together, showers of blood are  
blown

Before a never ending blast, and hiss  
 Against the blaze they cannot quench —  
     a lake,  
 A sea of blood — we are drown'd in  
     blood — for God  
 Has fill'd the quiver, and Death has  
     drawn the bow —  
 Sanguelac! Sanguelac! the arrow! the  
     arrow! [Dies.  
*Stigand.* It is the arrow of death in  
     his own heart —  
 And our great council wait to crown thee  
     king.

SCENE II.—IN THE GARDEN. THE  
 KING'S HOUSE NEAR LONDON.

*Edith.* Crown'd, crown'd and lost,  
 crown'd king — and lost to me!

(Singing.)

Two young lovers in winter weather,  
     None to guide them,  
 Walk'd at night on the misty heather;  
 Night, as black as a raven's feather;  
 Both were lost and found together,  
     None beside them.

That is the burthen of it — lost and found  
 Together in the cruel river Swale  
 A hundred years ago; and there's an-  
     other,

Lost, lost, the light of day,

To which the lover answers lovingly,

'I am beside thee.'

Lost, lost, we have lost the way.

'Love, I will guide thee.'

Whither, oh, whither? into the river,  
 Where we two may be lost together,  
 And lost for ever? 'Oh! never, oh!  
     never,

Tho' we be lost and be found together.'

Some think they loved within the pale  
     forbidden  
 By Holy Church: but who shall say? the  
     truth  
 Was lost in that fierce North, where *they*  
     were lost,

Where all good things are lost, where  
     Tostig lost  
 The good hearts of his people. It is  
     Harold!

(Enter HAROLD.)

Harold the King!

*Harold.* Call me not King, but  
     Harold.

*Edith.* Nay, thou art King!

*Harold.* Thine, thine, or King  
     or churl!

My girl, thou hast been weeping: turn  
     not thou

Thy face away, but rather let me be  
 King of the moment to thee, and com-  
     mand

That kiss my due when subject, which  
     will make

My kingship kinglier to me than to reign  
 King of the world without it.

*Edith.* Ask me not,

Lest I should yield it, and the second  
     curse

Descend upon thine head, and thou be  
     only

King of the moment over England.

*Harold.* Edith,

Tho' somewhat less a king to my true self  
 Than ere they crown'd me one, for I have  
     lost

Somewhat of upright stature thro' mine  
     oath,

Yet thee I would not lose, and sell not  
     thou

Our living passion for a dead man's  
     dream;

Stigand believed he knew not what he  
     spake.

O God! I cannot help it, but at times  
 They seem to me too narrow, all the  
     faiths

Of this grown world of ours, whose baby  
     eye

Saw them sufficient. Fool and wise, I  
     fear

This curse and scorn it. But a little  
     light! —

And on it falls the shadow of the priest;  
 Heaven yield us more! for better,  
     Woden, all

Our cancell'd warrior-gods, our grim  
     Walhalla,



Eternal war, than that the Saints at  
peace

The Holiest of our Holiest one should be  
This William's fellow-tricksters; — better  
die

Than credit this, for death is death, or  
else

Lifts us beyond the lie. Kiss me — thou  
art not

A holy sister yet, my girl, to fear  
There might be more than brother in my  
kiss,

And more than sister in thine own.

*Edith.* I dare not.

*Harold.* Scared by the church —  
'Love for a whole life long'

When was that sung?

*Edith.* Here to the nightingales.

*Harold.* Their anthems of no church,  
how sweet they are!

Nor kingly priest, nor priestly king to  
cross

Their billings ere they nest.

*Edith.* They are but of spring,  
They fly the winter change — not so with  
us —

No wings to come and go.

*Harold.* But wing'd souls flying  
Beyond all change and in the eternal  
distance

To settle on the Truth.

*Edith.* They are not so true,  
They change their mates.

*Harold.* Do they? I did not know it.

*Edith.* They say thou art to wed the  
Lady Aldwyth.

*Harold.* They say, they say.

*Edith.* If this be politic,

And well for thee and England — and for  
her —

Care not for me who love thee.

*Gurth (calling).* Harold, Harold!

*Harold.* The voice of Gurth! (*Enter*  
GURTH.) Good even, my good  
brother!

*Gurth.* Good even, gentle Edith.

*Edith.* Good even, Gurth.

*Gurth.* Ill news hath come! Our  
hapless brother, Tostig —

He, and the giant King of Norway,  
Harold

Hardrada — Scotland, Ireland, Iceland,  
Orkney,

Are landed North of Humber, and in a  
field

So packt with carnage that the dykes and  
brooks

Were bridged and damm'd with dead,  
have overthrown

Morcar and Edwin.

*Harold.* Well then, we must  
fight.

How blows the wind?

*Gurth.* Against St. Valery

And William.

*Harold.* Well then, we will to the  
North.

*Gurth.* Ay, but worse news: this  
William sent to Rome,

Swearing thou swarest falsely by his  
Saints:

The Pope and that Archdeacon Hilde-  
brand

His master, heard him, and have sent him  
back

A holy gonfanon, and a blessed hair  
Of Peter, and all France, all Burgundy,  
Poitou, all Christendom is raised against  
thee;

He hath cursed thee, and all those who  
fight for thee,

And given thy realm of England to the  
bastard.

*Harold.* Ha! ha!

*Edith.* Oh! laugh not! . . . Strange  
and ghastly in the gloom

And shadowing of this double thunder-  
cloud

That lours on England — laughter!

*Harold.* No, not strange!

This was old human laughter in old Rome  
Before a Pope was born, when that which  
reign'd

Call'd itself God. — A kindly rendering  
Of 'Render unto Cæsar.' . . . The Good  
Shepherd!

Take this, and render that.

*Gurth.* They have taken York.

*Harold.* The Lord was God and came  
as man — the Pope

Is man and comes as God. — York taken?

*Gurth.* Yea,

Tostig hath taken York!

*Harold.* To York then. Edith,

Hadst thou been braver, I had better  
braved

All — but I love thee and thou me — and  
that

Remains beyond all chances and all  
churches,

And that thou knowest.

*Edith.* Ay, but take back thy ring.  
It burns my hand — a curse to thee and me.  
I dare not wear it.

[*Proffers Harold the ring, which he takes.*

*Harold.* But I dare. God with thee!

[*Exeunt Harold and Gurth.*

*Edith.* The King hath cursed him, if  
he marry me;

The Pope hath cursed him, marry me or  
no!

God help me! I know nothing — can but  
pray

For Harold — pray, pray, pray — no help  
but prayer,

A breath that fleets beyond this iron world,  
And touches Him that made it.

#### ACT IV.

##### SCENE I.—IN NORTHUMBRIA.

ARCHBISHOP ALDRED, MORCAR, EDWIN,  
and Forces. *Enter HAROLD. The  
standard of the golden Dragon of Wes-  
sex preceding him.*

*Harold.* What! are thy people sullen  
from defeat?

Our Wessex dragon flies beyond the  
Humber,

No voice to greet it.

*Edwin.* Let not our great king  
Believe us sullen — only shamed to the  
quick

Before the king — as having been so  
bruised

By Harold, king of Norway; but our help  
Is Harold, king of England. Pardon us,  
thou!

Our silence is our reverence for the king!

*Harold.* Earl of the Mercians! if the  
truth be gall,

Cram me not thou with honey, when our  
good hive

Needs every sting to save it.

*Voices.* Aldwyth! Aldwyth!

*Harold.* Why cry thy people on thy  
sister's name?

*Morcar.* She hath won upon our  
people thro' her beauty,  
And pleasantness among them.

*Voices.* Aldwyth! Aldwyth!

*Harold.* They shout as they would  
have her for a queen.

*Morcar.* She hath follow'd with our  
host, and suffer'd all.

*Harold.* What would ye, men?

*Voice.* Our old Northumbrian  
crown,

And kings of our own choosing.

*Harold.* Your old crown  
Were little help without our Saxon carles  
Against Hardrada.

*Voice.* Little! we are Danes,  
Who conquer'd what we walk on, our  
own field.

*Harold.* They have been plotting here!  
[*Aside.*

*Voice.* He calls us little!

*Harold.* The kingdoms of this world  
began with little,

A hill, a fort, a city — that reach'd a hand  
Down to the field beneath it, 'Be thou  
mine,'

Then to the next, 'Thou also!' If the  
field

Cried out 'I am mine own,' another hill  
Or fort, or city, took it, and the first  
Fell, and the next became an Empire.

*Voice.* Yet  
Thou art but a West Saxon: we are Danes!

*Harold.* My mother is a Dane, and I  
am English;

There is a pleasant fable in old books,  
Ye take a stick, and break it; bind a score  
All in one faggot, snap it over knee,  
Ye cannot.

*Voice.* Hear King Harold! he  
says true!

*Harold.* Would ye be Norsemen?

*Voices.* No!

*Harold.* Or Norman?

*Voices.* No!

*Harold.* Snap not the faggot-band then.

*Voice.* That is true!

*Voice.* Ay, but thou art not kingly,  
only grandson

To Wulfnoth, a poor cow-herd.

*Harold.* This old Wulfnoth

Would take me on his knees and tell me  
. . . tales

Of Alfred and of Athelstan the Great  
 Who drove you Danes; and yet he held  
 that Dane,  
 Jute, Angle, Saxon, were or should be all  
 One England, for this cow-herd, like my  
 father,  
 Who shook the Norman scoundrels off  
 the throne,  
 Had in him kingly thoughts — a king of  
 men,  
 Not made but born, like the great king  
 of all,  
 A light among the oxen.

*Voice.* That is true!

*Voice.* Ay, and I love him now, for  
 mine own father  
 Was great, and cobbled.

*Voice.* Thou art Tostig's brother,  
 Who wastes the land.

*Harold.* This brother comes to save  
 Your land from waste; I saved it once  
 before,

For when your people banish'd Tostig  
 hence,

And Edward would have sent a host  
 against you,  
 Then I, who loved my brother, bade the  
 king

Who doted on him, sanction your decree  
 Of Tostig's banishment, and choice of  
 Morcar,

To help the realm from scattering.

*Voice.* King! thy brother,  
 If one may dare to speak the truth, was  
 wrong'd.

Wild was he, born so: but the plots  
 against him

Had madden'd tamer men.

*Morcar.* Thou art one of those  
 Who brake into Lord Tostig's treasure-  
 house

And slew two hundred of his following,  
 And now, when Tostig hath come back  
 with power,

Are frighted back to Tostig.

*Old Thane.* Ugh! Plots and feuds!  
 'This is my ninetieth birthday. Can ye  
 not

Be brethren? Godwin still at feud with  
 Alfgar,

And Alfgar hates King Harold. Plots  
 and feuds!

This is my ninetieth birthday!

*Harold.* Old man, Harold  
 Hates nothing; not *his* fault, if our two  
 houses

Be less than brothers.

*Voices.* Aldwyth, Harold, Aldwyth!

*Harold.* Again! Morcar! Edwin!

What do they mean?

*Edwin.* So the good king would deign  
 to lend an ear  
 Not overscornful, we might chance — per-  
 chance —

To guess their meaning.

*Morcar.* Thine own meaning, Harold,  
 To make all England one, to close all  
 feuds,

Mixing our bloods, that thence a king  
 may rise

Half-Godwin and half-Alfgar, one to rule  
 All England beyond question, beyond  
 quarrel.

*Harold.* Who sow'd this fancy here  
 among the people?

*Morcar.* Who knows what sows itself  
 among the people?

A goodly flower at times.

*Harold.* The Queen of Wales?  
 Why, Morcar, it is all but duty in her  
 To hate me; I have heard she hates me.

*Morcar.* No!  
 For I can swear to that, but cannot swear  
 That these will follow thee against the  
 Norseman,

If thou deny them this.

*Harold.* Morcar and Edwin,  
 When will ye cease to plot against my  
 house?

*Edwin.* The king can scarcely dream  
 that we, who know

His prowess in the mountains of the West,  
 Should care to plot against him in the  
 North.

*Morcar.* Who dares arraign us, king,  
 of such a plot?

*Harold.* Ye heard one witness even  
 now.

*Morcar.* The craven!  
 There is a faction risen again for Tostig,  
 Since Tostig came with Norway — fright  
 not love.

*Harold.* Morcar and Edwin, will ye,  
 if I yield,

Follow against the Norseman?

*Morcar.* Surely, surely!

*Harold.* Morcar and Edwin, will ye upon oath,  
Help us against the Norman?

*Morcar.* With good will;  
Yea, take the Sacrament upon it, king.

*Harold.* Where is thy sister?

*Morcar.* Somewhere hard at hand.  
Call and she comes.

[*One goes out, then enter Aldwyth.*

*Harold.* I doubt not but thou knowest  
Why thou art summon'd.

*Aldwyth.* Why?—I stay with these,  
Lest thy fierce Tostig spy me out alone,  
And flay me all alive.

*Harold.* Canst thou love one  
Who did discrown thine husband, unqueen  
thee?

Didst thou not love thine husband?

*Aldwyth.* Oh! my lord,  
The nimble, wild, red, wiry, savage  
king—

That was, my lord, a match of policy.

*Harold.* Was it?  
I knew him brave: he loved his land:  
he fain

Had made her great: his finger on her  
harp

(I heard him more than once) had in it  
Wales,

Her floods, her woods, her hills: had I  
been his,

I had been all Welsh.

*Aldwyth.* Oh, ay—all Welsh—and  
yet

I saw thee drive him up his hills—and  
women

Cling to the conquer'd, if they love, the  
more;

If not, they cannot hate the conqueror.  
We never—oh! good Morcar, speak for  
us,

His conqueror conquer'd Aldwyth.

*Harold.* Goodly news!

*Morcar.* Doubt it not thou! Since  
Griffyth's head was sent  
To Edward, she hath said it.

*Harold.* I had rather  
She would have loved her husband.

Aldwyth, Aldwyth,  
Canst thou love me, thou knowing where  
I love?

*Aldwyth.* I can, my lord, for mine  
own sake, for thine,

For England, for thy poor white dove,  
who flutters

Between thee and the porch, but then  
would find

Her nest within the cloister, and be still.

*Harold.* Canst thou love one who  
cannot love again?

*Aldwyth.* Full hope have I that love  
will answer love.

*Harold.* Then in the name of the  
great God, so be it!

Come, Aldred, join our hands before the  
hosts,

That all may see.

[*Aldred joins the hands of Harold  
and Aldwyth and blesses them.*

*Voices.* Harold, Harold and Aldwyth!

*Harold.* Set forth our golden Dragon,  
let him flap

The wings that beat down Wales!

Advance our Standard of the Warrior,  
Dark among gems and gold; and thou,  
brave banner,

Blaze like a night of fatal stars on those  
Who read their doom and die.

Where lie the Norsemen? on the Der-  
went? ay

At Stamford-bridge.

Morcar, collect thy men; Edwin, my  
friend—

Thou lingerest.—Gurth,—

Last night King Edward came to me in  
dreams—

The rosy face and long down-silvering  
beard—

He told me I should conquer:—

I am no woman to put faith in dreams.

(*To his army.*)

Last night King Edward came to me in  
dreams,

And told me we should conquer.

*Voices.* Forward! Forward!  
Harold and Holy Cross!

*Aldwyth.* The day is won!

SCENE II.—A PLAIN. BEFORE THE  
BATTLE OF STAMFORD-BRIDGE.

HAROLD and his Guard.

*Harold.* Who is it comes this way?  
Tostig? (*Enter TOSTIG with a  
small force.*) O brother,

What art thou doing here?

*Tostig.* I am foraging  
For Norway's army.

*Harold.* I could take and slay thee.  
Thou art in arms against us.

*Tostig.* Take and slay me,  
For Edward loved me.

*Harold.* Edward bade me spare thee.

*Tostig.* I hate King Edward, for he  
join'd with thee  
To drive me outlaw'd. Take and slay  
me, I say,

Or I shall count thee fool.

*Harold.* Take thee, or free thee,  
Free thee or slay thee, Norway will have  
war;

No man would strike with Tostig, save  
for Norway.

Thou art nothing in thine England, save  
for Norway,

Who loves not thee but war. What dost  
thou here,

Trampling thy mother's bosom into blood?  
*Tostig.* She hath wean'd me from it  
with such bitterness.

I come from mine own Earldom, my  
Northumbria;

Thou hast given it to the enemy of our  
house.

*Harold.* Northumbria threw thee off,  
she will not have thee,

Thou hast misused her: and, O crowning  
crime!

Hast murder'd thine own guest, the son  
of Orm,

Gamel, at thine own hearth.

*Tostig.* The slow, fat fool!  
He drawl'd and prated so, I smote him  
suddenly,

I knew not what I did. He held with  
Morcar. —

I hate myself for all things that I do.

*Harold.* And Morcar holds with us.  
Come back with him.

Know what thou dost; and we may find  
for thee,

So thou be chasten'd by thy banishment,  
Some easier earldom.

*Tostig.* What for Norway then?  
He looks for land among us, he and  
his.

*Harold.* Seven feet of English land,  
or something more,  
Seeing he is a giant.

*Tostig.* That is noble!  
That sounds of Godwin.

*Harold.* Come thou back, and be  
Once more a son of Godwin.

*Tostig (turns away).* O brother,  
brother,

O Harold —

*Harold (laying his hand on Tostig's  
shoulder).* Nay then, come thou  
back to us!

*Tostig (after a pause turning to him).*  
Never shall any man say that I,  
that Tostig

Conjured the mightier Harold from his  
North

To do the battle for me here in England,  
Then left him for the meaner! thee! —

Thou hast no passion for the House of  
Godwin —

Thou hast but cared to make thyself a  
king —

Thou hast sold me for a cry. —

Thou gavest thy voice against me in the  
Council —

I hate thee, and despise thee, and defy  
thee.

Farewell for ever! [*Exit.*  
*Harold.* On to Stamford-bridge!

## SCENE III.

AFTER THE BATTLE OF STAMFORD-  
BRIDGE. BANQUET.

HAROLD and ALDWYTH. GURTH,  
LEOFWIN, MORCAR, EDWIN, and  
other Earls and Thanes.

*Voices.* Hail! Harold! Aldwyth!  
hail, bridegroom and bride!

*Aldwyth (talking with Harold).* Answer  
them thou!

Is this our marriage-banquet? Would  
the wines

Of wedding had been dash'd into the  
cups

Of victory, and our marriage and thy glory  
Been drunk together! these poor hands

but sew,  
Spin, broider — would that they were  
man's to have held

The battle-axe by thee!

*Harold.* There was a moment

When being forced aloof from all my  
guard,  
And striking at Hardrada and his mad-  
men

I had wish'd for any weapon.

*Aldwyth.* Why art thou sad?

*Harold.* I have lost the boy who  
play'd at ball with me,

With whom I fought another fight than  
this

Of Stamford-bridge.

*Aldwyth.* Ay! ay! thy victories  
Over our own poor Wales, when at thy  
side

He conquer'd with thee.

*Harold.* No — the childish fist  
That cannot strike again.

*Aldwyth.* Thou art too kindly.  
Why didst thou let so many Norsemen  
hence?

Thy fierce forekings had clench'd their  
pirate hides

To the bleak church doors, like kites  
upon a barn.

*Harold.* Is there so great a need to  
tell thee why?

*Aldwyth.* Yea, am I not thy wife?

*Voices.* Hail, Harold, Aldwyth!  
Bridegroom and bride!

*Aldwyth.* Answer them! [*To Harold.*

*Harold (to all).* Earls and Thanes!  
Full thanks for your fair greeting of my  
bride!

Earls, Thanes, and all our countrymen!  
the day,

Our day beside the Derwent will not  
shine

Less than a star among the goldenest  
hours

Of Alfred, or of Edward his great son,  
Or Athelstan, or English Ironside

Who fought with Knut, or Knut who  
coming Dane

Died English. Every man about his  
king

Fought like a king; the king like his own  
man,

No better; one for all, and all for one,  
One soul! and therefore have we shatter'd

back

The hugest wave from Norseland ever  
yet

Surged on us, and our battle-axes broken

The Raven's wing, and dumb'd his carrion  
croak

From the gray sea for ever. Many are  
gone —

Drink to the dead who died for us, the  
living

Who fought and would have died, but  
happier lived,

If happier be to live; they both have life  
In the large mouth of England, till *her*

voice

Die with the world. Hail — hail!

*Morcar.* May all invaders perish like  
Hardrada!

All traitors fail like Tostig!

[*All drink but Harold.*

*Aldwyth.* Thy cup's full!

*Harold.* I saw the hand of Tostig  
cover it.

Our dear, dead, traitor-brother, Tostig,  
him

Reverently we buried. Friends, had I  
been here,

Without too large self-lauding I must  
hold

The sequel had been other than his  
league

With Norway, and this battle. Peace  
be with him!

He was not of the worst. If there be  
those

At banquet in this hall, and hearing me —  
For there be those I fear who prick'd the

lion

To make him spring, that sight of Danish  
blood

Might serve an end not English — peace  
with them

Likewise, if *they* can be at peace with  
what

God gave us to divide us from the wolf!

*Aldwyth (aside to Harold).* Make not  
our Morcar sullen: it is not wise.

*Harold.* Hail to the living who fought,  
the dead who fell!

*Voices.* Hail, hail!

*First Thane.* How ran that answer  
which King Harold gave

To his dead namesake, when he ask'd  
for England?

*Leafwin.* 'Seven feet of English earth,  
or something more,

Seeing he is a giant!'



*First Thane.* Then for the bastard  
Six feet and nothing more!

*Leafwin.* Ay, but belike  
Thou hast not learnt his measure.

*First Thane.* By St. Edmund  
I over-measure him. Sound sleep to the  
man

Here by dead Norway without dream or  
dawn!

*Second Thane.* What! is he bragging  
still that he will come

To thrust our Harold's throne from under  
him?

My nurse would tell me of a molehill crying  
To a mountain 'Stand aside and room  
for me!'

*First Thane.* Let him come! let him  
come. Here's to him, sink or  
swim! [*Drinks.*]

*Second Thane.* God sink him!

*First Thane.* Cannot hands which  
had the strength

To shove that stranded iceberg off our  
shores,

And send the shatter'd North again to  
sea,

Scuttle his cockle-shell? What's Brun-  
anburg

To Stamford-bridge? a war-crash, and so  
hard,

So loud, that, by St. Dunstan, old St.  
Thor—

By God, we thought him dead — but our  
old Thor

Heard his own thunder again, and woke  
and came

Among us again, and mark'd the sons of  
those

Who made this Britain England, break  
the North:

Mark'd how the war-axe swang,  
Heard how the war-horn sang,  
Mark'd how the spear-head sprang,  
Heard how the shield-wall rang,  
Iron on iron clang,  
Anvil on hammer bang—

*Second Thane.* Hammer on anvil,  
hammer on anvil. Old dog,

Thou art drunk, old dog!

*First Thane.* Too drunk to fight with  
thee!

*Second Thane.* Fight thou with thine  
own double, not with me,  
Keep that for Norman William!

*First Thane.* Down with William!

*Third Thane.* The washerwoman's  
brat!

*Fourth Thane.* The tanner's bastard!

*Fifth Thane.* The Falaise byblow!

[*Enter a Thane, from Pevensey, spat-  
ter'd with mud.*]

*Harold.* Ay, but what late guest,  
As haggard as a fast of forty days,  
And caked and plaster'd with a hundred  
mires,

Hath stumbled on our cups?

*Thane from Pevensey.* My lord the  
King!

William the Norman, for the wind had  
changed—

*Harold.* I felt it in the middle of that  
fierce fight

At Stamford-bridge. William hath landed,  
ha?

*Thane from Pevensey.* Landed at  
Pevensey—I am from Pevensey—

Hath wasted all the land at Pevensey—  
Hath harried mine own cattle—God con-

found him!

I have ridden night and day from Peven-  
sey—

A thousand ships—a hundred thousand  
men—

Thousands of horses, like as many lions  
Neighing and roaring as they leapt to  
land—

*Harold.* How oft in coming hast thou  
broken bread?

*Thane from Pevensey.* Some thrice,  
or so.

*Harold.* Bring not thy hollowness  
On our full feast. Famine is fear, were  
it but

Of being starved. Sit down, sit down,  
and eat,

And, when again red-blooded, speak  
again;

(*Aside.*) The men that guarded Eng-  
land to the South

Were scatter'd to the harvest. . . . No  
power mine

To hold their force together. . . . Many  
are fallen

At Stamford-bridge . . . the people  
stupid-sure  
Sleep like their swine . . . In South and  
North at once  
I could not be.

(*Aloud.*) Gurth, Leofwin,  
Morcar, Edwin!

(*Pointing to the revellers.*) The curse of  
England! these are drown'd in  
wassail,

And cannot see the world but thro' their  
wines!

Leave them! and thee too, Aldwyth,  
must I leave —

Harsh is the news! hard is our honey-  
moon!

Thy pardon. (*Turning round to his  
attendants.*) Break the banquet  
up. . . . Ye four!

And thou, my carrier-pigeon of black  
news,

Cram thy crop full, but come when thou  
art call'd. [*Exit Harold.*]

### ACT V.

SCENE I. — A TENT ON A MOUND,  
FROM WHICH CAN BE SEEN THE FIELD  
OF SENLAC.

HAROLD *sitting; by him standing* HUGH  
MARGOT *the Monk, GURTH, LEOFWIN.*

*Harold.* Refer my cause, my crown  
to Rome! . . . The wolf

Mudded the brook and predetermined all.  
Monk,

Thou hast said thy say, and had my  
constant 'No'

For all but instant battle. I hear no  
more.

*Margot.* Hear me again — for the last  
time. Arise,

Scatter thy people home, descend the  
hill,

Lay hands of full allegiance in thy Lord's  
And crave his mercy, for the Holy Father  
Hath given this realm of England to the  
Norman.

*Harold.* Then for the last time, monk,  
I ask again

When had the Lateran and the Holy  
Father

To do with England's choice of her own  
king?

*Margot.* Earl, the first Christian  
Cæsar drew to the East

To leave the Pope dominion in the West.  
He gave him all the kingdoms of the  
West.

*Harold.* So! — did' he? — Earl — I  
have a mind to play

The William with thine eyesight and thy  
tongue.

Earl — ay — thou art but a messenger of  
William.

I am weary — go: make me not wroth  
with thee!

*Margot.* Mock-king, I am the mes-  
senger of God,

His Norman Daniel! Mene, Mene,  
Tekel!

Is thy wrath Hell, that I should spare to  
cry,

Yon heaven is wroth with *thee*? Hear  
me again!

Our Saints have moved the Church that  
moves the world,

And all the Heavens and very God: they  
heard —

They know King Edward's promise and  
thine — thine.

*Harold.* Should they not know free  
England crowns herself?

Not know that he nor I had power to  
promise?

Not know that Edward cancell'd his own  
promise?

And for *my* part therein — back to that  
juggler, [*Rising.*]

Tell him the Saints are nobler than he  
dreams,

Tell him that God is nobler than the  
Saints,

And tell him we stand arm'd on Senlac  
hill,

And bide the doom of God.

*Margot.* Hear it thro' me.

The realm for which thou art forsworn is  
cursed,

The babe enwomb'd and at the breast is  
cursed,

The corpse thou wheldest with thine  
earth is cursed,

The soul who fighteth on thy side is  
cursed,

The seed thou sowest in thy field is  
cursed,

The steer wherewith thou plowest thy  
field is cursed,

The fowl that fleeth o'er thy field is  
cursed,

And thou, usurper, liar —

*Harold.* Out, beast monk!

[*Lifting his hand to strike him.*

*Gurth stops the blow.*

I ever hated monks.

*Margot.* I am but a voice  
Among you: murder, martyr me if ye  
will —

*Harold.* Thanks, Gurth! The simple,  
silent, selfless man

Is worth a world of tonguesters. (*To  
Margot.*) Get thee gone!

He means the thing he says. See him  
out safe!

*Leofwin.* He hath blown himself as  
red as fire with curses.

An honest fool! Follow me, honest fool,  
But if thou blurt thy curse among our  
folk,

I know not — I may give that egg-bald  
head

The tap that silences.

*Harold.* See him out safe.

[*Exeunt Leofwin and Margot.*

*Gurth.* Thou hast lost thine even  
temper, brother Harold!

*Harold.* Gurth, when I past by  
Waltham, my foundation

For men who serve the neighbour, not  
themselves,

I cast me down prone, praying; and,  
when I rose,

They told me that the Holy Rood had  
lean'd

And bow'd above me; whether that which  
held it

Had weaken'd, and the Rood itself were  
bound

To that necessity which binds us down;  
Whether it bow'd at all but in their fancy;

Or if it bow'd, whether it symbol'd ruin  
Or glory, who shall tell? but they were  
sad,

And somewhat sadden'd me.

*Gurth.* Yet if a fear,

Or shadow of a fear, lest the strange  
Saints

By whom thou swarest, should have power  
to balk

Thy puissance in this fight with him, who  
made

And heard thee swear — brother — / have  
not sworn —

If the king fall, may not the kingdom  
fall?

But if I fall, I fall, and thou art king;

And, if I win, I win, and thou art king;

Draw thou to London, there make  
strength to breast

Whatever chance, but leave this day to  
me.

*Leofwin (entering).* And waste the  
land about thee as thou goest,

And be thy hand as winter on the field,  
To leave the foe no forage.

*Harold.* Noble Gurth!

Best son of Godwin! If I fall, I fall —

The doom of God! How should the  
people fight

When the king flies? And, Leofwin, art  
thou mad?

How should the King of England waste  
the fields

Of England, his own people? — no glance  
yet

Of the Northumbrian helmet on the  
heath?

*Leofwin.* No, but a shoal of wives  
upon the heath,

And someone saw thy willy-nilly nun  
Vying a tress against our golden fern.

*Harold.* Vying a tear with our cold  
dews, a sigh

With these low-moaning heavens. Let  
her be fetch'd.

We have parted from our wife without  
reproach,

Tho' we have pierced thro' all her  
practices;

And that is well.

*Leofwin.* I saw her even now:

She hath not left us.

*Harold.* Naught of Morcar then?

*Gurth.* Nor seen, nor heard; thine,  
William's or his own

As wind blows, or tide flows: belike he  
watches,

If this war-storm in one of its rough rolls  
Wash up that old crown of Northumber-  
land.

*Harold.* I married her for Morcar —  
a sin against  
The truth of love. Evil for good, it  
seems,  
Is oft as childless of the good as evil  
For evil.

*Leofwin.* Good for good hath borne  
at times  
A bastard false as William.

*Harold.* Ay, if Wisdom  
Pair'd not with Good. But I am some-  
what worn,  
A snatch of sleep were like the peace of  
God.

Gurth, Leofwin, go once more about the  
hill —  
What did the dead man call it — Sanguelac,  
The Lake of Blood?

*Leofwin.* A lake that dips in William  
As well as Harold.

*Harold.* Like enough. I have seen  
The trenches dug, the palisades uprear'd  
And wattled thick with ash and willow-  
wards;

Yea, wrought at them myself. Go round  
once more;

See all be sound and whole. No Norman  
horse  
Can shatter England, standing shield by  
shield;

Tell that again to all.

*Gurth.* I will, good brother.

*Harold.* Our guardsman hath but  
toil'd his hand and foot,  
I hand, foot, heart and head. Some  
wine! (*One pours wine into a  
goblet which he hands to Harold.*)  
Too much!

What? we must use our battle-axe to-day.  
Our guardsmen have slept well, since we  
came in?

*Leofwin.* Ay, slept and snored. Your  
second-sighted man  
That scared the dying conscience of the  
king,  
Misheard their snores for groans. They  
are up again.

And chanting that old song of Brunan-  
burg  
Where England conquer'd.

*Harold.* That is well. The Norman,  
What is he doing?

*Leofwin.* Praying for Normandy;  
Our scouts have heard the tinkle of their  
bells.

*Harold.* And our old songs are prayers  
for England too!

But by all Saints —

*Leofwin.* Barring the Norman!  
*Harold.* Nay,

Were the great trumpet blowing dooms-  
day dawn,

I needs must rest. Call when the  
Norman moves —

[*Exeunt all but Harold.*]

No horse — thousands of horses — our  
shield wall —

Wall — break it not — break not — break —  
[*Sleeps.*]

*Vision of Edward.* Son Harold, I thy  
king, who came before

To tell thee thou shouldst win at Stam-  
ford-bridge,

Come yet once more, from where I am  
at peace,

Because I loved thee in my mortal day,  
To tell thee thou shalt die on Senlac  
hill —

Sanguelac!

*Vision of Wulfnoth.* O brother, from  
my ghastly oubliette

I send my voice across the narrow seas —  
No more, no more, dear brother, never-  
more —

Sanguelac!

*Vision of Tostig.* O brother, most  
unbrotherlike to me,

Thou gavest thy voice against me in my  
life,

I give my voice against thee from the  
grave —

Sanguelac!

*Vision of Norman Saints.* O hapless  
Harold! King but for an hour!

Thou swarest falsely by our blessed  
bones,

We give our voice against thee out of  
heaven!

Sanguelac! Sanguelac! The arrow! the  
arrow!

*Harold (starting up, battle-axe in  
hand).* Away!

My battle-axe against your voices. Peace!  
The king's last word — 'the arrow!' I  
shall die —

I die for England then, who lived for  
 England —  
 What nobler? men must die.  
 I cannot fall into a falser world —  
 I have done no man wrong. Tostig,  
 poor brother,  
 Art *thou* so anger'd?  
 Fain had I kept thine earldom in thy  
 hands  
 Save for thy wild and violent will that  
 wrench'd  
 All hearts of freemen from thee. I could  
 do  
 No other than this way advise the king  
 Against the race of Godwin. Is it possible  
 That mortal men should bear their earthly  
 heats  
 Into yon bloodless world, and threaten us  
 thence  
 Unschool'd of Death? Thus then thou  
 art revenged —  
 I left our England naked to the South  
 To meet thee in the North. The Norse-  
 man's raid  
 Hath helpt the Norman, and the race of  
 Godwin  
 Hath ruin'd Godwin. No — our waking  
 thoughts  
 Suffer a stormless shipwreck in the pools  
 Of sullen slumber, and arise again  
 Disjointed : only dreams — where mine  
 own self  
 Takes part against myself! Why? for a  
 spark  
 Of self-disdain born in me when I swear  
 Falsely to him, the falser Norman, over  
 His gilded ark of mummy-saints, by  
 whom  
 I knew not that I swear, — not for my-  
 self —  
 For England — yet not wholly —

(Enter EDITH.)

Edith, Edith,  
 Get thou into thy cloister as the king  
 Will'd it : be safe : the perjury-mongering  
 Count  
 Hath made too good an use of Holy  
 Church  
 To break her close! There the great  
 God of truth  
 Fill all thine hours with peace! — A lying  
 devil

Hath haunted me — mine oath — my  
 wife — I fain  
 Had made my marriage not a lie; I  
 could not:  
 Thou art my bride! and thou in after  
 years  
 Praying perchance for this poor soul of  
 mine  
 In cold, white cells beneath an icy moon —  
 This memory to thee! — and this to  
 England,  
 My legacy of war against the Pope  
 From child to child, from Pope to Pope,  
 from age to age,  
 Till the sea wash her level with her shores,  
 Or till the Pope be Christ's.

Enter ALDWYTH.

*Aldwyth* (to Edith). Away from him!

*Edith*. I will . . . I have not spoken  
 to the king

One word; and one I must. Farewell!

[*Going*.  
 Not yet.

*Harold*.

Stay.

*Edith*. To what use?

*Harold*. The king commands thee,  
 woman!

(To Aldwyth.)

Have thy two brethren sent their forces  
 in?

*Aldwyth*. Nay, I fear not.

*Harold*. Then there's no force in thee!  
 Thou didst possess thyself of Edward's ear  
 To part me from the woman that I loved!  
 Thou didst arouse the fierce Northum-  
 brians!

Thou hast been false to England and to  
 me! —

As . . . in some sort . . . I have been  
 false to thee.

Leave me. No more — Pardon on both  
 sides — Go!

*Aldwyth*. Alas, my lord, I loved thee.

*Harold* (*bitterly*). With a love  
 Passing thy love for Griffyth! wherefore  
 now

Obey my first and last commandment.  
 Go!

*Aldwyth*. O Harold! husband! Shall  
 we meet again?

*Harold*. After the battle — after the  
 battle. Go.

*Aldwyth.* I go. (*Aside.*) That I could stab her standing there!

[*Exit Aldwyth.*]

*Edith.* Alas, my lord, she loved thee.

*Harold.* Never! never!

*Edith.* I saw it in her eyes!

*Harold.* I see it in thine.

And not on thee — nor England — fall God's doom!

*Edith.* On thee? on me. And thou art England! Alfred

Was England. Ethelred was nothing. England

Is but her king, and thou art Harold!

*Harold.* Edith, The sign in heaven — the sudden blast at sea —

My fatal oath — the dead Saints — the dark dreams —

The Pope's Anathema — the Holy Rood That bow'd to me at Waltham — Edith, if I, the last English king of England —

*Edith.* No, First of a line that coming from the people, And chosen by the people —

*Harold.* And fighting for And dying for the people —

*Edith.* Living! living!

*Harold.* Yea so, good cheer! thou art Harold, I am Edith!

Look not thus wan!

*Edith.* What matters how I look? Have we not broken Wales and Norseland? slain,

Whose life was all one battle, incarnate war,

Their giant-king, a mightier man-in-arms Than William?

*Harold.* Ay, my girl, no tricks in him —

No bastard he! when all was lost, he yell'd,

And bit his shield, and dash'd it on the ground,

And swaying his two-handed sword about him,

Two deaths at every swing, ran in upon us And died so, and I loved him as I hate

This liar who made me liar. If Hate can kill,

And Loathing wield a Saxon battle-axe —

*Edith.* Waste not thy might before the battle!

*Harold.* No, And thou must hence. Stigand will see thee safe, And so — farewell.

[*He is going, but turns back.* The ring thou darest not wear,

I have had it fashion'd, see, to meet my hand.

[*Harold shows the ring which is on his finger.*]

Farewell!

[*He is going, but turns back again.* I am dead as Death this day to aught of earth's

Save William's death or mine.

*Edith.* Thy death! — to-day! Is it not thy birthday?

*Harold.* Ay, that happy day! A birthday welcome! happy days and many!

One — this! [*They embrace.*]

Look, I will bear thy blessing into the battle

And front the doom of God.

*Norman cries (heard in the distance).* Ha Rou! Ha Rou!

*Enter GURTH.*

*Gurth.* The Norman moves!

*Harold.* Harold and Holy Cross! [*Exeunt Harold and Gurth.*]

*Enter STIGAND.*

*Stigand.* Our Church in arms — the lamb the lion — not

Spear into pruning-hook — the counter way —

Cowl, helm; and crozier, battle-axe. Abbot Alfwig,

Leofric, and all the monks of Peterboro'

Strike for the king; but I, old wretch, old Stigand,

With hands too limp to brandish iron — and yet

I have a power — would Harold ask me for it —

I have a power.

*Edith.* What power, holy father?

*Stigand.* Power now from Harold to command thee hence

And see thee safe from Senlac.

*Edith.* I remain!



*Stigand.* Yea, so will I, daughter,  
until I find  
Which way the battle balance. I can  
see it  
From where we stand: and, live or die,  
I would  
I were among them!

*Canons from Waltham (singing without).*

Salva patriam  
Sancte Pater,  
Salva Fili,  
Salva Spiritus,  
Salva patriam,  
Sancta Mater.<sup>1</sup>

*Edith.* Are those the blessed angels  
quiring, father?

*Stigand.* No, daughter, but the canons  
out of Waltham,  
The king's foundation, that have follow'd  
him.

*Edith.* O God of battles, make their  
wall of shields  
Firm as thy cliffs, strengthen their  
palisades!  
What is that whirring sound?

*Stigand.* The Norman arrow!

*Edith.* Look out upon the battle — is  
he safe?

*Stigand.* The king of England stands  
between his banners.

He glitters on the crowning of the hill.  
God save King Harold!

*Edith.* — chosen by his people  
And fighting for his people!

*Stigand.* There is one  
Come as Goliath came of yore — he flings  
His brand in air and catches it again,  
He is chanting some old war-song.

*Edith.* And no David  
To meet him?

*Stigand.* Ay, there springs a Saxon  
on him,  
Falls — and another falls.

*Edith.* Have mercy on us!

*Stigand.* Lo! our good Gurth hath  
smitten him to the death.

*Edith.* So perish all the enemies of  
Harold!

*Canons (singing).*

<sup>1</sup> The *a* throughout these Latin hymns should  
be sounded broad, as in 'father.'

Hostis in Angliam  
Ruit prædator,  
Illorum, Domine,  
Scutum scindatur!  
Hostis per Angliæ  
Plagas bacchatur;  
Casa crematur,  
Pastor fugatur  
Grex trucidatur —

*Stigand.* Illos trucida, Domine.

*Edith.* Ay, good father.

*Canons (singing).*

Illorum scelera  
Poena sequatur!

*English cries.* Harold and Holy  
Cross! Out! out!

*Stigand.* Our javelins  
Answer their arrows. All the Norman  
foot  
Are storming up the hill. The range of  
knights

Sit, each a statue on his horse, and wait.

*English cries.* Harold and God Al-  
mighty!

*Norman cries.* Ha Rou! Ha Rou!

*Canons (singing).*

Eques cum pedite  
Præpediatur!  
Illorum in lacrymas  
Cruor fundatur!  
Pereant, pereant,  
Anglia precatur.

*Stigand.* Look, daughter, look.

*Edith.* Nay, father, look for *me*!

*Stigand.* Our axes lighten with a  
single flash

About the summit of the bill, and heads  
And arms are sliver'd off and splinter'd  
by

Their lightning — and they fly — the Nor-  
man flies.

*Edith.* Stigand, O father, have we  
won the day?

*Stigand.* No, daughter, no — they fall  
behind the horse —

Their horse are thronging to the bar-  
ricades;

I see the gonfanon of Holy Peter  
Floating above their helmets — ha! he is  
down!

*Edith.* He down! Who down?

*Stigand.* The Norman Count is down.

*Edith.* So perish all the enemies of  
England!

*Stigand.* No, no, he hath risen again  
— he bares his face —

Shouts something — he points onward —  
all their horse

Swallow the hill locust-like, swarming up.

*Edith.* O God of battles, make his  
battle-axe keen

As thine own sharp-dividing justice,  
heavy

As thine own bolts that fall on crimeful  
heads

Charged with the weight of heaven  
wherefrom they fall!

*Canons (singing).*

Jacta tonitrua  
Deus bellator!  
Surgas e tenebris,  
Sis vindicator!  
Fulmina, fulmina  
Deus vastator!

*Edith.* O God of battles, they are  
three to one,  
Make thou one man as three to roll them  
down!

*Canons (singing).*

Equus cum equite  
Dejiciatur!  
Acies, Acies  
Prona sternatur!  
Illorum lanceas  
Frange Creator!

*Stigand.* Yea, yea, for how their lances  
snap and shiver  
Against the shifting blaze of Harold's  
axe!

War-woodman of old Woden, how he  
fells

The mortal copse of faces! There! And  
there!

The horse and horseman cannot meet the  
shield,

The blow that brains the horseman  
cleaves the horse,

The horse and horseman roll along the  
hill,

They fly once more, they fly, the Norman  
flies!

Equus cum equite  
Præcipitatur.

*Edith.* O God, the God of truth hath  
heard my cry.

Follow them, follow them, drive them to  
the sea!

Illorum scelera  
Pœna sequatur!

*Stigand.* Truth! no; a lie; a trick,  
a Norman trick!

They turn on the pursuer, horse against  
foot,

They murder all that follow.

*Edith.* Have mercy on us!

*Stigand.* Hot-headed fools — to burst  
the wall of shields!

They have broken the commandment of  
the king!

*Edith.* His oath was broken — O holy  
Norman Saints,

Ye that are now of heaven, and see  
beyond

Your Norman shrines, pardon it, pardon it,  
That he forswore himself for all he loved,  
Me, me and all! Look out upon the  
battle!

*Stigand.* They thunder again upon  
the barricades.

My sight is eagle, but the strife so thick —  
This is the hottest of it: hold, ash! hold,  
willow!

*English cries.* Out, out!

*Norman cries.* Ha Rou!

*Stigand.* Ha! Gurth hath leapt upon  
him

And slain him: he hath fallen.

*Edith.* And I am heard.  
Glory to God in the Highest! fallen,  
fallen!

*Stigand.* No, no, his horse — he  
mounts another — wields

His war-club, dashes it on Gurth, and  
Gurth,

Our noble Gurth, is down!

*Edith.* Have mercy on us!

*Stigand.* And Leofwin is down!

*Edith.* Have mercy on us!

O Thou that knowest, let not my strong  
prayer

Be weaken'd in thy sight, because I love  
The husband of another!

*Norman cries.* Ha Rou! Ha Rou!

*Edith.* I do not hear our English war-cry.

*Stigand.* No.

*Edith.* Look out upon the battle—is he safe?

*Stigand.* He stands between the banners with the dead

So piled about him he can hardly move.

*Edith (takes up the war-cry).* Out! out!

*Norman cries.* Ha Rou!

*Edith (cries out).* Harold and Holy Cross!

*Norman cries.* Ha Rou! Ha Rou!

*Edith.* What is that whirring sound?

*Stigand.* The Norman sends his arrows up to Heaven,

They fall on those within the palisade!

*Edith.* Look out upon the hill—is Harold there?

*Stigand.* Sanguelac — Sanguelac — the arrow — the arrow! — away!

SCENE II. — FIELD OF THE DEAD.  
NIGHT.

ALDWYTH and EDITH.

*Aldwyth.* O Edith, art thou here? O Harold, Harold —

Our Harold — we shall never see him more.

*Edith.* For there was more than sister in my kiss,

And so the Saints were wroth. I cannot love them,

For they are Norman Saints — and yet I should —

They are so much holier than their harlot's son

With whom they play'd their game against the king!

*Aldwyth.* The king is slain, the kingdom overthrown!

*Edith.* No matter!

*Aldwyth.* How no matter, Harold slain? —

I cannot find his body. O help me thou! O Edith, if I ever wrought against thee,

Forgive me thou, and help me here!

*Edith.* No matter!

*Aldwyth.* Not help me, nor forgive me?

*Edith.* So thou saidest.

*Aldwyth.* I say it now, forgive me!

*Edith.* Cross me not!

I am seeking one who wedded me in secret.

Whisper! God's angels only know it. Ha!

What art *thou* doing here among the dead?

They are stripping the lead bodies naked yonder,

And thou art come to rob them of their rings!

*Aldwyth.* O Edith, Edith, I have lost both crown

and husband.

*Edith.* So have I.

*Aldwyth.* I tell thee, girl,

I am seeking my dead Harold.

*Edith.* And I mine!

The Holy Father strangled him with a hair Of Peter, and his brother Tostig helpt;

The wicked sister clapt her hands and laugh'd;

Then all the dead fell on him.

*Aldwyth.* Edith, Edith —

*Edith.* What was he like, this husband? like to thee?

Call not for help from me. I knew him not.

He lies not here: not close beside the standard.

Here fell the truest, manliest hearts of England.

Go further hence and find him.

*Aldwyth.* She is crazed!

*Edith.* That doth not matter either.

Lower the light.

He must be here.

*Enter two Canons, OSGOD and ATHELIC, with torches. They turn over the dead bodies and examine them as they pass.*

*Osgod.* I think that this is Thurkill.

*Athelic.* More likely Godric.

*Osgod.* I am sure this body

Is Alfwig, the king's uncle.

*Athelic.* So it is!

No, no — brave Gurth, one gash from brow to knee!

*Osgod.* And here is Leofwin.

*Edith.* And here is *He!*

*Aldwyth.* Harold? Oh no — nay, if it were — my God, They have so maim'd and murder'd all his face

There is no man can swear to him.

*Edith.* But one woman! Look you, we never mean to part again. I have found him, I am happy.

Was there not someone ask'd me for forgiveness?

I yield it freely, being the true wife Of this dead King, who never bore revenge.

*Enter COUNT WILLIAM and WILLIAM MALET.*

*William.* Who be these women? And what body is this?

*Edith.* Harold, thy better!

*William.* Ay, and what art thou?

*Edith.* His wife!

*Malet.* Not true, my girl, here is the Queen! [*Pointing out Aldwyth.*]

*William (to Aldwyth).* Wast thou his Queen?

*Aldwyth.* I was the Queen of Wales.

*William.* Why then of England.

Madam, fear us not.

(*To Malet.*) Knowest thou this other?

*Malet.* When I visited England, Some held she was his wife in secret — some —

Well — some believed she was his paramour.

*Edith.* Norman, thou liest! liars all of you, Your Saints and all! I am his wife! and she —

For look, our marriage ring!

[*She draws it off the finger of Harold.*]

I lost it somehow —

I lost it, playing with it when I was wild. That bred the doubt! but I am wiser now. . . .

I am too wise. . . . Will none among you all

Bear me true witness — only for this once —

That I have found it here again?

[*She puts it on.*]

And thou,

Thy wife am I for ever and evermore.

[*Falls on the body and dies.*]

*William.* Death! — and enough of death for this one day, The day of St. Calixtus, and the day, My day when I was born.

*Malet.* And this dead king's Who, king or not, hath kinglike fought and fallen,

His birthday, too. It seems but yestereven I held it with him in his English halls, His day, with all his roof-tree ringing 'Harold,'

Before he fell into the snare of Guy; When all men counted Harold would be king,

And Harold was most happy.

*William.* Thou art half English. Take them away!

Malet, I vow to build a church to God Here on the hill of battle; let our high altar

Stand where their standard fell . . . where these two lie.

Take them away, I do not love to see them.

Pluck the dead woman off the dead man, Malet!

*Malet.* Faster than ivy. Must I hack her arms off?

How shall I part them?

*William.* Leave them. Let them be! Bury him and his paramour together.

He that was false in oath to me, it seems Was false to his own wife. We will not give him

A Christian burial: yet he was a warrior, And wise, yea truthful, till that blighted vow

Which God avenged to-day.

Wrap them together in a purple cloak And lay them both upon the waste sea-shore

At Hastings, there to guard the land for which

He did forswear himself — a warrior — ay, And but that Holy Peter fought for us,

And that the false Northumbrian held aloof,

And save for that chance arrow which the Saints

Sharpen'd and sent against him — who can tell? —

Three horses had I slain beneath me: twice

I thought that all was lost. Since I  
knew battle,  
And that was from my boyhood, never  
yet —  
No, by the splendour of God — have I  
fought men  
Like Harold and his brethren, and his  
guard  
Of English. Every man about his king  
Fell where he stood. They loved him :  
and, pray God  
My Normans may but move as true with  
me  
To the door of death. Of one self-stock  
at first,

Make them again one people — Norman,  
English ;  
And English, Norman ; we should have  
a hand  
To grasp the world with, and a foot to  
stamp it . . .  
Flat. Praise the Saints. It is over.  
No more blood !  
I am king of England, so they thwart me  
not,  
And I will rule according to their laws.  
(To Aldwyth.) Madam, we will entreat  
thee with all honour.  
*Aldwyth.* My punishment is more  
than I can bear.

# BECKET.

TO THE LORD CHANCELLOR,  
THE RIGHT HONOURABLE EARL OF SELBORNE.

MY DEAR SELBORNE—To you, the honoured Chancellor of our own day, I dedicate this dramatic memorial of your great predecessor;—which, altho' not intended in its present form to meet the exigencies of our modern theatre, has nevertheless—for so you have assured me—won your approbation. — Ever yours,

TENNYSON.

## DRAMATIS PERSONÆ.

HENRY II. (*son of the Earl of Anjou*).  
THOMAS BECKET, *Chancellor of England, afterwards Archbishop of Canterbury*.  
GILBERT FOLIOT, *Bishop of London*.  
ROGER, *Archbishop of York*.  
*Bishop of Hereford*.  
HILARY, *Bishop of Chichester*.  
JOCELYN, *Bishop of Salisbury*.  
JOHN OF SALISBURY } *friends of Becket*.  
HERBERT OF BOSHAM }  
WALTER MAP, *reputed author of 'Goliath,' Latin poems against the priesthood*.  
KING LOUIS OF FRANCE.  
GEOFFREY, *son of Rosamund and Henry*.  
GRIM, *a monk of Cambridge*.  
SIR REGINALD FITZURSE }  
SIR RICHARD DE BRITO } *the four knights of the King's household, enemies of Becket*.  
SIR WILLIAM DE TRACY }  
SIR HUGH DE MORVILLE }  
DE BROC OF SALTWOOD CASTLE.  
LORD LEICESTER.  
PHILIP DE ELEEMOSYNA.  
TWO KNIGHT TEMPLARS.  
JOHN OF OXFORD (*called the Swearer*).  
ELEANOR OF AQUITAINE, *Queen of England (divorced from Louis of France)*.  
ROSAMUND DE CLIFFORD.  
MARGERV.

Knights, Monks, Beggars, etc.

## PROLOGUE.

*A Castle in Normandy. Interior of the Hall. Roofs of a City seen thro' Windows.*

HENRY and BECKET at chess.

*Henry.* So then our good Archbishop  
Theobald

Lies dying.

*Becket.* I am grieved to know as  
much.

*Henry.* But we must have a mightier  
man than he

For his successor.

*Becket.* Have you thought of one?

*Henry.* A cleric lately poison'd his  
own mother,  
And being brought before the courts of  
the Church,  
They but degraded him. I hope they  
whipt him.

I would have hang'd him.

*Becket.* It is your move.

*Henry.* Well—there. [*Moves.*  
The Church in the pell-mell of Stephen's  
time

Hath climb'd the throne and almost  
clutch'd the crown;

But by the royal customs of our realm



The Church should hold her baronies of  
me,  
Like other lords amenable to law.  
I'll have them written down and made  
the law.

*Becket.* My liege, I move my bishop.

*Henry.* And if I live,

No man without my leave shall excom-  
municate

My tenants or my household.

*Becket.* Look to your king.

*Henry.* No man without my leave  
shall cross the seas

To set the Pope against me — I pray your  
pardon.

*Becket.* Well — will you move?

*Henry.* There. [*Moves.*]

*Becket.* Check — you move so wildly.

*Henry.* There then! [*Moves.*]

*Becket.* Why — there then, for you see  
my bishop

Hath brought your king to a standstill.  
You are beaten.

*Henry* (*kicks over the board*). Why,  
there then — down go bishop and  
king together.

I loathe being beaten; had I fixt my  
fancy

Upon the game I should have beaten  
thee,

But that was vagabond.

*Becket.* Where, my liege? With  
Phryne,

Or Lais, or thy Rosamund, or another?

*Henry.* My Rosamund is no Lais,  
Thomas Becket;

And yet she plagues me too — no fault in  
her —

But that I fear the Queen would have her  
life.

*Becket.* Put her away, put her away,  
my liege!

Put her away into a nunnery!

Safe enough there from her to whom thou  
art bound

By Holy Church. And wherefore should  
she seek

The life of Rosamund de Clifford more  
Than that of other paramours of thine?

*Henry.* How dost thou know I am  
not wedded to her?

*Becket.* How should I know?

*Henry.* That is my secret, Thomas.

*Becket.* State secrets should be patent  
to the statesman

Who serves and loves his king, and whom  
the king

Loves not as statesman, but true lover  
and friend.

*Henry.* Come, come, thou art but  
deacon, not yet bishop,

No, nor archbishop, nor my confessor  
yet.

I would to God thou wert, for I should  
find

An easy father confessor in thee.

*Becket.* St. Denis, that thou shouldst  
not. I should beat

Thy kingship as my bishop hath beaten  
it.

*Henry.* Hell take thy bishop then,  
and my kingship too!

Come, come, I love thee and I know thee,  
I know thee,

A doter on white pheasant-flesh at feasts,  
A sauce-deviser for thy days of fish,

A dish-designer, and most amorous  
Of good old red sound liberal Gascon  
wine:

Will not thy body rebel, man, if thou  
flatter it?

*Becket.* That palate is insane which  
cannot tell

A good dish from a bad, new wine from  
old.

*Henry.* Well, who loves wine loves  
woman.

*Becket.* So I do.

Men are God's trees, and women are  
God's flowers;

And when the Gascon wine mounts to  
my head,

The trees are all the statelier, and the  
flowers

Are all the fairer.

*Henry.* And thy thoughts, thy fancies?

*Becket.* Good dogs, my liege, well  
train'd, and easily call'd

Off from the game.

*Henry.* Save for some once or twice,  
When they ran down the game and  
worried it.

*Becket.* No, my liege, no! — not once  
— in God's name, no!

*Henry.* Nay, then, I take thee at thy  
word — believe thee

The veriest Galahad of old Arthur's hall.  
And so this Rosamund, my true heart-  
wife,

Not Eleanor — she whom I love indeed  
As a woman should be loved — Why dost  
thou smile

So dolorously?

*Becket.* My good liege, if a man  
Wastes himself among women, how should  
he love

A woman, as a woman should be loved?

*Henry.* How shouldst thou know  
that never hast loved one?

Come, I would give her to thy care in  
England

When I am out in Normandy or Anjou.

*Becket.* My lord, I am your subject,  
not your —

*Henry.* Pander.

God's eyes! I know all that — not my  
purveyor

Of pleasures, but to save a life — her life;  
Ay, and the soul of Eleanor from hell-fire.  
I have built a secret bower in England,

Thomas,

A nest in a bush.

*Becket.* And where, my liege?

*Henry (whispers).* Thine ear.

*Becket.* That's lone enough.

*Henry (laying paper on table).* This  
chart here mark'd 'Her Bower,'

Take, keep it, friend. See, first, a cir-  
cling wood,

A hundred pathways running everyway,  
And then a brook, a bridge; and after  
that

This labyrinthine brickwork maze in  
maze,

And then another wood, and in the midst  
A garden and my Rosamund. Look,  
this line —

The rest you see is colour'd green — but  
this

Draws thro' the chart to her.

*Becket.* This blood-red line?

*Henry.* Ay! blood, perchance, except  
thou see to her.

*Becket.* And where is she? There  
in her English nest?

*Henry.* Would God she were — no,  
here within the city.

We take her from her secret bower in  
Anjou

And pass her to her secret bower in  
England.

She is ignorant of all but that I love  
her.

*Becket.* My liege, I pray thee let me  
hence: a widow

And orphan child, whom one of thy wild  
barons —

*Henry.* Ay, ay, but swear to see to  
her in England.

*Becket.* Well, well, I swear, but not  
to please myself.

*Henry.* Whatever come between us?

*Becket.* What should come  
Between us, Henry?

*Henry.* Nay — I know not, Thomas.

*Becket.* What need then? Well —  
whatever come between us.

[*Going.*

*Henry.* A moment! thou didst help  
me to my throne

In Theobald's time, and after by thy  
wisdom

Hast kept it firm from shaking; but  
now I,

For my realm's sake, myself must be the  
wizard

To raise that tempest which will set it  
trembling

Only to base it deeper. I, true son  
Of Holy Church — no croucher to the

Gregories

That tread the kings their children under-  
heel —

Must curb her; and the Holy Father,  
while

This Barbarossa butts him from his chair,  
Will need my help — be facile to my

hands.

Now is my time. Yet — lest there should  
be flashes

And fulminations from the side of Rome,  
An interdict on England — I will have

My young son Henry crown'd the King  
of England,

That so the Papal bolt may pass by  
England,

As seeming his, not mine, and fall abroad.  
I'll have it done — and now.

*Becket.* Surely too young  
Even for this shadow of a crown; and  
tho'

I love him heartily, I can spy already

A strain of hard and headstrong in him.  
Say,

The Queen should play his kingship  
against thine!

*Henry.* I will not think so, Thomas:  
Who shall crown him?

Canterbury is dying.

*Becket.* The next Canterbury.

*Henry.* And who shall he be, my  
friend Thomas? Who?

*Becket.* Name him; the Holy Father  
will confirm him.

*Henry* (*lays his hand on Becket's  
shoulder*). Here!

*Becket.* Mock me not. I am not  
even a monk.

Thy jest — no more. Why — look — is  
this a sleeve

For an archbishop?

*Henry.* But the arm within  
Is Becket's, who hath beaten down my  
foes.

*Becket.* A soldier's, not a spiritual  
arm.

*Henry.* I lack a spiritual soldier,  
Thomas —

A man of this world and the next to boot.

*Becket.* There's Gilbert Foliot.

*Henry.* He! too thin, too thin.

Thou art the man to fill out the Church  
robe;

Your Foliot fasts and fawns too much  
for me.

*Becket.* Roger of York.

*Henry.* Roger is Roger of York.  
King, Church, and State to him but foils  
wherein

To set that precious jewel, Roger of York.  
No.

*Becket.* Henry of Winchester?

*Henry.* Him who crown'd Stephen —  
King Stephen's brother! No; too royal  
for me.

And I'll have no more Anselms.

*Becket.* Sire, the business  
Of thy whole kingdom waits me: let  
me go.

*Henry.* Answer me first.

*Becket.* Then for thy barren jest  
Take thou mine answer in bare common-  
place —

*Nolo episcopari.*

*Henry.* Ay, but *Nolo*

*Archiepiscopari*, my good friend,  
Is quite another matter.

*Becket.* A more awful one.  
Make *me* archbishop! Why, my liege,  
I know

Some three or four poor priests a thou-  
sand times

Fitter for this grand function. *Me* arch-  
bishop!

God's favour and king's favour might so  
clash

That thou and I — That were a jest  
indeed!

*Henry.* Thou angerest me, man: I  
do not jest.

*Enter* ELEANOR and SIR REGINALD  
FITZURSE.

*Eleanor* (*singing*). Over! the sweet  
summer closes,

The reign of the roses is done —

*Henry* (*to Becket, who is going*). Thou  
shalt not go. I have not ended  
with thee.

*Eleanor* (*seeing chart on table*). This  
chart with the red line! her bower!  
whose bower?

*Henry.* The chart is not mine, but  
Becket's: take it, Thomas.

*Eleanor.* Becket! O — ay — and these  
chessmen on the floor — the king's crown  
broken! Becket hath beaten thee again  
— and thou hast kicked down the board.  
I know thee of old.

*Henry.* True enough, my mind was  
set upon other matters.

*Eleanor.* What matters? State mat-  
ters? love matters?

*Henry.* My love for thee, and thine  
for me.

*Eleanor.* Over! the sweet summer  
closes,

The reign of the roses is done;

Over and gone with the roses,

And over and gone with the sun.

Here; but our sun in Aquitaine lasts  
longer. I would I were in Aquitaine  
again — your north chills me.

Over! the sweet summer closes,

And never a flower at the close;

Over and gone with the roses,

And winter again and the snows.

That was not the way I ended it first — but unsymmetrically, preposterously, illogically, out of passion, without art — like a song of the people. Will you have it? The last Parthian shaft of a forlorn Cupid at the King's left breast, and all left-handedness and under-handedness.

And never a flower at the close,  
Over and gone with the roses,  
Not over and gone with the rose.

True, one rose will outblossom the rest, one rose in a bower. I speak after my fancies, for I am a Troubadour, you know, and won the violet at Toulouse; but my voice is harsh here, not in tune, a nightingale out of season; for marriage, rose or no rose, has killed the golden violet.

*Becket.* Madam, you do ill to scorn wedded love.

*Eleanor.* So I do. Louis of France loved me, and I dreamed that I loved Louis of France; and I loved Henry of England, and Henry of England dreamed that he loved me; but the marriage-garland withers even with the putting on, the bright link rusts with the breath of the first after-marriage kiss, the harvest moon is the ripening of the harvest, and the honeymoon is the gall of love; he dies of his honeymoon. I could pity this poor world myself that it is no better ordered.

*Henry.* Dead is he, my Queen? What, altogether? Let me swear nay to that by this cross on thy neck. God's eyes! what a lovely cross! what jewels!

*Eleanor.* Doth it please you? Take it and wear it on that hard heart of yours — there. [Gives it to him.]

*Henry (puts it on).* On this left breast before so hard a heart,

To hide the scar left by thy Parthian dart.  
*Eleanor.* Has my simple song set you jingling? Nay, if I took and translated that hard heart into our Provençal facilities, I could so play about it with the rhyme —

*Henry.* That the heart were lost in the rhyme and the matter in the metre.

May we not pray you, Madam, to spare us the hardness of your facility?

*Eleanor.* The wells of Castaly are not wasted upon the desert. We did but jest.

*Henry.* There's no jest on the brows of Herbert there. What is it, Herbert?

*Enter HERBERT OF BOSHAM.*

*Herbert.* My liege, the good Archbishop is no more.

*Henry.* Peace to his soul!

*Herbert.* I left him with peace on his face — that sweet other-world smile, which will be reflected in the spiritual body among the angels. But he longed much to see your Grace and the Chancellor ere he past, and his last words were a commendation of Thomas Becket to your Grace as his successor in the archbishoprick.

*Henry.* Ha, Becket! thou rememberest our talk!

*Becket.* My heart is full of tears — I have no answer.

*Henry.* Well, well, old men must die, or the world would grow mouldy, would only breed the past again. Come to me to-morrow. Thou hast but to hold out thy hand. Meanwhile the revenues are mine. A-hawking, a-hawking! If I sit, I grow fat.

[Leaps over the table, and exit.]

*Becket.* He did prefer me to the chancellorship,

Believing I should ever aid the Church — But have I done it? He commends me now

From out his grave to this archbishoprick.

*Herbert.* A dead man's dying wish should be of weight.

*Becket.* His should. Come with me. Let me learn at full

The manner of his death, and all he said. [Exeunt Herbert and Becket.]

*Eleanor.* Fitzurse, that chart with the red line — thou sawest it — her bower.

*Fitzurse.* Rosamund's?

*Eleanor.* Ay — there lies the secret of her whereabouts, and the King gave it to his Chancellor.

*Fitzurse.* To this son of a London merchant—how your Grace must hate him!

*Eleanor.* Hate him? as brave a soldier as Henry and a goodlier man: but thou—dost thou love this Chancellor, that thou hast sworn a voluntary allegiance to him?

*Fitzurse.* Not for my love toward him, but because he had the love of the King. How should a baron love a beggar on horseback, with the retinue of three kings behind him, outroyalling royalty? Besides, he help the King to break down our castles, for the which I hate him.

*Eleanor.* For the which I honour him. Statesman not Churchman he. A great and sound policy that: I could embrace him for it: you could not see the King for the kinglings.

*Fitzurse.* Ay, but he speaks to a noble as tho' he were a churl, and to a churl as if he were a noble.

*Eleanor.* Pride of the plebeian!

*Fitzurse.* And this plebeian like to be Archbishop!

*Eleanor.* True, and I have an inherited loathing of these black sheep of the Papacy. Archbishop? I can see further into a man than our hot-headed Henry, and if there ever come feud between Church and Crown, and I do not then charm this secret out of our loyal Thomas, I am not Eleanor.

*Fitzurse.* Last night I followed a woman in the city here. Her face was veiled, but the back methought was Rosamund—his paramour, thy rival. I can feel for thee.

*Eleanor.* Thou feel for me!—paramour—rival! King Louis had no paramours, and I loved him none the more. Henry had many, and I loved him none the less—now neither more nor less—not at all; the cup's empty. I would she were but his paramour, for men tire of their fancies; but I fear this one fancy hath taken root, and borne blossom too, and she, whom the King loves indeed, is a power in the State. Rival!—ay, and when the King passes, there may come a crash and embroilment as in Stephen's

time; and her children—canst thou not—that secret matter which would heat the King against thee (*whispers him and he starts*). Nay, that is safe with me as with thyself: but canst thou not—thou art drowned in debt—thou shalt have our love, our silence, and our gold—canst thou not—if thou light upon her—free me from her?

*Fitzurse.* Well, Madam, I have loved her in my time.

*Eleanor.* No, my bear, thou hast not. My Courts of Love would have held thee guiltless of love—the fine attractions and repulses, the delicacies, the subtleties.

*Fitzurse.* Madam, I loved according to the main purpose and intent of nature.

*Eleanor.* I warrant thee! thou wouldst hug thy Cupid till his ribs cracked—enough of this. Follow me this Rosamund day and night, whithersoever she goes; track her, if thou canst, even into the King's lodging, that I may (*clenches her fist*)—may at least have my cry against him and her,—and thou in thy way shouldst be jealous of the King, for thou in thy way didst once, what shall I call it, affect her thine own self.

*Fitzurse.* Ay, but the young colt winced and whinnied and flung up her heels; and then the King came honeying about her, and this Becket, her father's friend, like enough staved us from her.

*Eleanor.* Us!

*Fitzurse.* Yea, by the Blessed Virgin! There were more than I buzzing round the blossom—De Tracy—even that flint De Brito.

*Eleanor.* Carry her off among you; run in upon her and devour her, one and all of you; make her as hateful to herself and to the King, as she is to me.

*Fitzurse.* I and all would be glad to wreak our spite on the rosefaced minion of the King, and bring her to the level of the dust, so that the King—

*Eleanor.* Let her eat it like the serpent, and be driven out of her paradise.

## ACT I.

## SCENE I. — BECKET'S HOUSE IN LONDON.

*Chamber barely furnished.* BECKET  
unrobing. HERBERT OF BOSHAM and  
SERVANT.

*Servant.* Shall I not help your lordship to your rest?

*Becket.* Friend, am I so much better than thyself that thou shouldst help me? Thou art wearied out with this day's work, get thee to thine own bed.

Leave me with Herbert, friend.

[*Exit Servant.*  
Help me off, Herbert, with this — and this.

*Herbert.* Was not the people's blessing as we past heart-comfort and a balsam to thy blood?

*Becket.* The people know their Church a tower of strength, A bulwark against Throne and Baronage. Too heavy for me, this; off with it, Herbert!

*Herbert.* Is it so much heavier than thy Chancellor's robe?

*Becket.* No; but the Chancellor's and the Archbishop's Together more than mortal man can bear.

*Herbert.* Not heavier than thine armour at Thoulouse?

*Becket.* O Herbert, Herbert, in my chancellorship I more than once have gone against the Church.

*Herbert.* To please the King?

*Becket.* Ay, and the King of kings, Or justice; for it seem'd to me but just The Church should pay her scutage like the lords.

But hast thou heard this cry of Gilbert Foliot

That I am not the man to be your Primate,

For Henry could not work a miracle — Make an Archbishop of a soldier?

*Herbert.* Ay,  
For Gilbert Foliot held himself the man.

*Becket.* Am I the man? My mother, ere she bore me, Dream'd that twelve stars fell glittering out of heaven

Into her bosom.

*Herbert.* Ay, the fire, the light, The spirit of the twelve Apostles enter'd Into thy making.

*Becket.* And when I was a child, The Virgin, in a vision of my sleep, Gave me the golden keys of Paradise.

Dream,  
Or prophecy, that?

*Herbert.* Well, dream and prophecy both.

*Becket.* And when I was of Theobald's household, once —

The good old man would sometimes have his jest —

He took his mitre off, and set it on me, And said, 'My young Archbishop — thou wouldst make

A stately Archbishop!' Jest or prophecy there?

*Herbert.* Both, Thomas, both.

*Becket.* Am I the man? That rang Within my head last night, and when I slept

Methought I stood in Canterbury Minster,

And spake to the Lord God, and said, 'O Lord,

I have been a lover of wines, and delicate meats,

And secular splendours, and a favourer Of players, and a courtier, and a feeder

Of dogs and hawks, and apes, and lions, and lynxes.

Am I the man?' And the Lord answer'd me,

'Thou art the man, and all the more the man.'

And then I ask'd again, 'O Lord my God, Henry the King hath been my friend, my brother,

And mine uplifter in this world, and chosen me

For this thy great archbishoprick, believing

That I should go against the Church with him,



And I shall go against him with the Church,

And I have said no word of this to him: Am I the man?' And the Lord answer'd me,

'Thou art the man, and all the more the man.'

And thereupon, methought, He drew toward me,

And smote me down upon the Minster floor.

I fell.

*Herbert.* God make not thee, but thy foes, fall.

*Becket.* I fell. Why fall? Why did He smite me? What?

Shall I fall off—to please the King once more?

Not fight—tho' somehow traitor to the King—

My trust and mine utmost for the Church?

*Herbert.* Thou canst not fall that way. Let traitor be;

For how have fought thine utmost for the Church,

Save from the throne of thine archbishoprick?

And how been made Archbishop hadst thou told him,

'I mean to fight mine utmost for the Church,

Against the King?'

*Becket.* But dost thou think the King Forced mine election?

*Herbert.* I do think the King Was potent in the election, and why not?

Why should not Heaven have so inspired the King?

Be comforted. Thou art the man—be thou

A mightier Anselm.

*Becket.* I do believe thee, then. I am the man.

And yet I seem appall'd—on such a sudden

At such an eagle-height I stand and see The rift that runs between me and the King.

I served our Theobald well when I was with him;

I served King Henry well as Chancellor;

I am his no more, and I must serve the Church.

This Canterbury is only less than Rome, And all my doubts I fling from me like dust,

Winnow and scatter all scruples to the wind,

And all the puissance of the warrior, And all the wisdom of the Chancellor, And all the heap'd experiences of life, I cast upon the side of Canterbury— Our holy mother Canterbury, who sits With tatter'd robes. Laics and barons thro'

The random gifts of careless kings, have graspt

Her livings, her advowsons, granges, farms,

And goodly acres—we will make her whole;

Not one rood lost. And for these Royal customs,

These ancient Royal customs—they are Royal,

Not of the Church—and let them be anathema,

And all that speak for them anathema.

*Herbert.* Thomas, thou art moved too much.

*Becket.* O Herbert, here

I gash myself asunder from the King, Tho' leaving each, a wound; mine own, a grief

To show the scar for ever—his, a hate Not ever to be heal'd.

*Enter ROSAMUND DE CLIFFORD, flying from SIR REGINALD FITZURSE. Drops her veil.*

*Becket.* Rosamund de Clifford!

*Rosamund.* Save me, father, hide me—they follow me—and I must not be known.

*Becket.* Pass in with Herbert there.

[*Exeunt Rosamund and Herbert by side door.*]

*Enter FITZURSE.*

*Fitzurse.* The Archbishop!

*Becket.* Ay! what wouldst thou, Reginald?

*Fitzurse.* Why—why, my lord, I follow'd—follow'd one—

*Becket.* And then what follows? Let me follow thee.

*Fitzurse.* It much imports me I should know her name.

*Becket.* What her?

*Fitzurse.* The woman that I follow'd hither.

*Becket.* Perhaps it may import her all as much  
Not to be known.

*Fitzurse.* And what care I for that? Come, come, my lord Archbishop; I saw that door  
Close even now upon the woman.

*Becket.* Well?

*Fitzurse (making for the door).* Nay, let me pass, my lord, for I must know.

*Becket.* Back, man!

*Fitzurse.* Then tell me who and what she is.

*Becket.* Art thou so sure thou followedst anything?  
Go home, and sleep thy wine off, for thine eyes  
Glare stupid-wild with wine.

*Fitzurse (making to the door).* I must and will.

I care not for thy new archbishoprick.

*Becket.* Back, man, I tell thee!  
What!  
Shall I forget my new archbishoprick  
And smite thee with my crozier on the skull?  
'Fore God, I am a mightier man than thou.

*Fitzurse.* It well befits thy new archbishoprick  
To take the vagabond woman of the street  
Into thine arms!

*Becket.* O drunken ribaldry!  
Out, beast! out, bear!

*Fitzurse.* I shall remember this.

*Becket.* Do, and begone!  
[*Exit Fitzurse.*  
[*Going to the door, sees De Tracy.*  
Tracy, what dost thou here?

*De Tracy.* My lord, I follow'd Reginald Fitzurse.

*Becket.* Follow him out!

*De Tracy.* I shall remember this  
Discourtesy. [Exit.

*Becket.* Do. These be those baron-brutes  
That havock'd all the land in Stephen's day.  
Rosamund de Clifford.

*Re-enter ROSAMUND and HERBERT.*

*Rosamund.* Here am I.

*Becket.* Why here?  
We gave thee to the charge of John of Salisbury,  
To pass thee to thy secret bower to-morrow.  
Wast thou not told to keep thyself from sight?

*Rosamund.* Poor bird of passage! so I was; but, father,  
They say that you are wise in winged things,  
And know the ways of Nature. Bar the bird  
From following the fled summer — a chink — he's out,  
Gone! And there stole into the city a breath  
Full of the meadows, and it minded me  
Of the sweet woods of Clifford, and the walks  
Where I could move at pleasure, and I thought  
Lo! I must out or die.

*Becket.* Or out and die.  
And what hast thou to do with this Fitzurse?

*Rosamund.* Nothing. He sued my hand. I shook at him.  
He found me once alone. Nay — nay I cannot  
Tell you: my father drove him and his friends,  
De Tracy and De Brito, from our castle. I was but fourteen and an April then. I heard him swear revenge.

*Becket.* Why will you court it  
By self-exposure? flutter out at night?  
Make it so hard to save a moth from the fire?

*Rosamund.* I have saved many of 'em. You catch 'em, so,  
Softly, and fling them out to the free air.  
They burn themselves *within-door*.

*Becket.* Our good John

Must speed you to your bower at once.

The child

Is there already.

*Rosamund.* Yes — the child — the child —

O rare, a whole long day of open field.

*Becket.* Ay, but you go disguised.

*Rosamund.* O rare again!

We'll baffle them, I warrant. What shall it be?

I'll go as a nun.

*Becket.* No.

*Rosamund.* What, not good enough Even to play at nun?

*Becket.* Dan John with a nun, That Map, and these new railers at the Church May plaster his clean name with scurrilous rhymes!

No!

Go like a monk, cowling and clouding up That fatal star, thy Beauty, from the squint

Of lust and glare of malice. Good night! good night!

*Rosamund.* Father, I am so tender to all hardness!

Nay, father, first thy blessing.

*Becket.* Wedded?

*Rosamund.* Father!

*Becket.* Well, well! I ask no more. Heaven bless thee! hence!

*Rosamund.* O holy father, when thou seest him next,

Commend me to thy friend.

*Becket.* What friend?

*Rosamund.* The King.

*Becket.* Herbert, take out a score of armed men

To guard this bird of passage to her cage;

And watch Fitzurse, and if he follow thee,

Make him thy prisoner. I am Chancellor yet.

[*Exeunt Herbert and Rosamund.*]

Poor soul! poor soul!

My friend, the King! . . . O thou Great Seal of England,

Given me by my dear friend the King of England —

We long have wrought together, thou and I —

Now must I send thee as a common friend

To tell the King, my friend, I am against him.

We are friends no more: he will say that, not I.

The worldly bond between us is dissolved, Not yet the love: can I be under him As Chancellor? as Archbishop over him? Go therefore like a friend slighted by one

That hath climb'd up to nobler company. Not slighted — all but moan'd for: thou must go.

I have not dishonour'd thee — I trust I have not;

Not mangled justice. May the hand that next

Inherits thee be but as true to thee

As mine hath been! O my dear friend, the King!

O brother! — I may come to martyrdom. I am martyr in myself already. — Herbert!

*Herbert (re-entering).* My lord, the town is quiet, and the moon Divides the whole long street with light and shade.

No footfall — no Fitzurse. We have seen her home.

*Becket.* The hog hath tumbled himself into some corner, Some ditch, to snore away his drunkenness

Into the sober headache, — Nature's moral

Against excess. Let the Great Seal be sent

Back to the King to-morrow.

*Herbert.* Must that be? The King may rend the bearer limb from limb.

Think on it again.

*Becket.* Against the moral excess No physical ache, but failure it may be Of all we aim'd at. John of Salisbury Hath often laid a cold hand on my heats,

And Herbert hath rebuked me even now.

I will be wise and wary, not the soldier As Foliot swears it. — John, and out of breath!

*Enter JOHN OF SALISBURY.*

*John of Salisbury.* Thomas, thou wast not happy taking charge Of this wild Rosamund to please the King,  
Nor am I happy having charge of her — The included Danaë has escaped again Her tower, and her Acrisius — where to seek?

I have been about the city.

*Becket.* Thou wilt find her Back in her lodging. Go with her — at once —

To-night — my men will guard you to the gates.

Be sweet to her, she has many enemies. Send the Great Seal by daybreak. Both, good night!

SCENE II. — STREET IN NORTHAMPTON LEADING TO THE CASTLE.

ELEANOR'S RETAINERS and BECKET'S RETAINERS fighting. *Enter ELEANOR and BECKET from opposite streets.*

*Eleanor.* Peace, fools!

*Becket.* Peace, friends! what idle brawl is this?

*Retainer of Becket.* They said — her Grace's people — thou wast found —

Liars! I shame to quote 'em — caught, my lord,

With a wanton in thy lodging — Hell requite 'em!

*Retainer of Eleanor.* My liege, the Lord Fitzurse reported this In passing the Castle even now.

*Retainer of Becket.* And then they mock'd us and we fell upon 'em, For we would live and die for thee, my lord,

However kings and queens may frown on thee.

*Becket to his Retainers.* Go, go — no more of this!

*Eleanor to her Retainers.* Away! — *(Exeunt Retainers)* Fitzurse —

*Becket.* Nay, let him be.

*Eleanor.* No, no, my Lord Archbishop,

'Tis known you are midwinter to all women,

But often in your chancellorship you served

The follies of the King.

*Becket.* No, not these follies!

*Eleanor.* My lord, Fitzurse beheld her in your lodging.

*Becket.* Whom?

*Eleanor.* Well — you know — the minion, Rosamund.

*Becket.* He had good eyes!

*Eleanor.* Then hidden in the street He watch'd her pass with John of Salisbury

And heard her cry 'Where is this bower of mine?'

*Becket.* Good ears too!

*Eleanor.* You are going to the Castle, Will you subscribe the customs?

*Becket.* I leave that, Knowing how much you reverence Holy Church,

My liege, to your conjecture.

*Eleanor.* I and mine — And many a baron holds along with me —

Are not so much at feud with Holy Church

But we might take your side against the customs —

So that you grant me one slight favour.

*Becket.* What?

*Eleanor.* A sight of that same chart which Henry gave you

With the red line — 'her bower.'

*Becket.* And to what end?

*Eleanor.* That Church must scorn herself whose fearful Priest Sits winking at the license of a king,

Altho' we grant when kings are dangerous The Church must play into the hands of kings;

Look! I would move this wanton from his sight

And take the Church's danger on myself.

*Becket.* For which she should be duly grateful.

*Eleanor.* True!

Tho' she that binds the bond, herself should see

That kings are faithful to their marriage vow.

*Becket.* Ay, Madam, and queens also.

*Eleanor.* And queens also!

What is your drift?

*Becket.* My drift is to the Castle,  
Where I shall meet the Barons and my  
King. [Exit.

DE BROC, DE TRACY, DE BRITO,  
DE MORVILLE (*passing*).

*Eleanor.* To the Castle?

*De Broc.* Ay!

*Eleanor.* Stir up the King, the Lords!  
Set all on fire against him!

*De Brito.* Ay, good Madam!  
[*Exeunt.*

*Eleanor.* Fool! I will make thee  
hateful to thy King.  
Churl! I will have thee frighted into  
France,  
And I shall live to trample on thy grave.

SCENE III.—THE HALL IN NORTH-  
AMPTON CASTLE.

*On one side of the stage the doors of an  
inner Council-chamber, half-open.  
At the bottom, the great doors of the  
Hall. ROGER ARCHBISHOP OF YORK,  
FOLIOT BISHOP OF LONDON, HILARY  
OF CHICHESTER, BISHOP OF HEREF-  
FORD, RICHARD DE HASTINGS (*Grand  
Prior of Templars*), PHILIP DE ELEE-  
MOSYNA (*the Pope's Almoner*), and  
others. DE BROC, FITZURSE, DE BRITO,  
DE MORVILLE, DE TRACY, and other  
BARONS assembled—a table before  
them. JOHN OF OXFORD, *President  
of the Council.**

*Enter* BECKET and HERBERT OF  
BOSHAM.

*Becket.* Where is the King?

*Roger of York.* Gone hawking on  
the Nene,

His heart so gall'd with thine ingrati-  
tude,

He will not see thy face till thou hast  
sign'd

These ancient laws and customs of the  
realm.

Thy sending back the Great Seal mad-  
den'd him,

He all but pluck'd the bearer's eyes  
away.

Take heed, lest he destroy thee utterly.

*Becket.* Then shalt thou step into my  
place and sign.

*Roger of York.* Didst thou not promise  
Henry to obey

These ancient laws and customs of the  
realm?

*Becket.* Saving the honour of my  
order—ay.

Customs, traditions,—clouds that come  
and go;

The customs of the Church are Peter's  
rock.

*Roger of York.* Saving thine order!  
But King Henry sware

That, saving his King's kingship, he  
would grant thee

The crown itself. Saving thine order,  
Thomas,

Is black and white at once, and comes  
to naught.

O bolster'd up with stubbornness and  
pride,

Wilt thou destroy the Church in fighting  
for it,

And bring us all to shame?

*Becket.* Roger of York,  
When I and thou were youths in Theo-  
bald's house,

Twice did thy malice and thy calumnies  
Exile me from the face of Theobald.

Now I am Canterbury and thou art York.

*Roger of York.* And is not York the  
peer of Canterbury?

Did not Great Gregory bid St. Austin here  
Found two archbishopricks, London and  
York?

*Becket.* What came of that? The  
first archbishop fled,

And York lay barren for a hundred years.  
Why, by this rule, Foliot may claim the

pall  
For London too.

*Foliot.* And with good reason too,  
For London had a temple and a priest

When Canterbury hardly bore a name.

*Becket.* The pagan temple of a pagan  
Rome!

The heathen priesthood of a heathen  
creed!

Thou goest beyond thyself in petulancy!

Who made thee London? Who, but  
Canterbury?

*John of Oxford.* Peace, peace, my  
lords! these customs are no longer  
As Canterbury calls them, wandering  
clouds,  
But by the King's command are written  
down,  
And by the King's command I, John of  
Oxford,

The President of this Council, read them.  
*Becket.* Read!

*John of Oxford (reads).* 'All causes  
of advowsons and presentations, whether  
between laymen or clerics, shall be tried  
in the King's court.'

*Becket.* But that I cannot sign: for  
that would drag  
The cleric before the civil judgment-seat,  
And on a matter wholly spiritual.

*John of Oxford.* 'If any cleric be  
accused of felony, the Church shall not  
protect him; but he shall answer to the  
summons of the King's court to be tried  
therein.'

*Becket.* And that I cannot sign.  
Is not the Church the visible Lord on  
earth?  
Shall hands that do create the Lord be  
bound

Behind the back like laymen-criminals?  
The Lord be judged again by Pilate? No!

*John of Oxford.* 'When a bishoprick  
falls vacant, the King, till another be  
appointed, shall receive the revenues  
thereof.'

*Becket.* And that I cannot sign. Is  
the King's treasury  
A fit place for the monies of the Church,  
That be the patrimony of the poor?

*John of Oxford.* 'And when the va-  
cancy is to be filled up, the King shall  
summon the chapter of that church to  
court, and the election shall be made in  
the Chapel Royal, with the consent of our  
lord the King, and by the advice of his  
Government.'

*Becket.* And that I cannot sign: for  
that would make  
Our island-Church a schism from Chris-  
tendom,  
And weight down all free choice beneath  
the throne.

*Foliot.* And was thine own election  
so canonical,

Good father?

*Becket.* If it were not, Gilbert Foliot,  
I mean to cross the sea to France, and lay  
My crozier in the Holy Father's hands,  
And bid him re-create me, Gilbert Foliot.

*Foliot.* Nay; by another of these cus-  
toms thou

Wilt not be suffer'd so to cross the seas  
Without the license of our lord the King.

*Becket.* That, too, I cannot sign.

DE BROC, DE BRITO, DE TRACY, FITZ-  
URSE, DE MORVILLE, *start up—a clash  
of swords.*

Sign and obey!

*Becket.* My lords, is this a combat or  
a council?

Are ye my masters, or my lord the King?  
Ye make this clashing for no love o' the  
customs

Or constitutions, or whate'er ye call them,  
But that there be among you those that  
hold

Lands reft from Canterbury.

*De Broc.* And mean to keep them,  
In spite of thee!

*Lords (shouting).* Sign, and obey the  
crown!

*Becket.* The crown? Shall I do less  
for Canterbury

Than Henry for the crown? King Ste-  
phen gave

Many of the crown lands to those that  
helped him;

So did Matilda, the King's mother. Mark,  
When Henry came into his own again,  
Then he took back not only Stephen's  
gifts,

But his own mother's, lest the crown  
should be

Shorn of ancestral splendour. This did  
Henry.

Shall I do less for mine own Canterbury?  
And thou, De Broc, that holdest Salt-  
wood Castle —

*De Broc.* And mean to hold it, or —  
*Becket.* To have my life.

*De Broc.* The King is quick to anger;  
if thou anger him,  
We wait but the King's word to strike  
thee dead.



*Becket.* Strike, and I die the death of martyrdom;

Strike, and ye set these customs by my death

Ringing their own death-knell thro' all the realm.

*Herbert.* And I can tell you, lords, ye are all as like

To lodge a fear in Thomas Becket's heart  
As find a hare's form in a lion's cave.

*John of Oxford.* Ay, sheathe your swords, ye will displease the King.

*De Broc.* Why down then thou! but an he come to Saltwood,

By God's death, thou shalt stick him like a calf! [*Sheathing his sword.*]

*Hilary.* O my good lord, I do entreat thee — sign.

Save the King's honour here before his barons.

He hath sworn that thou shouldst sign, and now but shuns

The semblance of defeat; I have heard him say

He means no more; so if thou sign, my lord,

That were but as the shadow of an assent.

*Becket.* 'Twould seem too like the substance, if I sign'd.

*Philip de Eleemosyna.* My lord, thine ear! I have the ear of the Pope.

As thou hast honour for the Pope our master,

Have pity on him, sorely prest upon  
By the fierce Emperor and his Antipope.

Thou knowest he was forced to fly to France;

He pray'd me to pray thee to pacify  
Thy King; for if thou go against thy

King,

Then must he likewise go against thy King,

And then thy King might join the Antipope,

And that would shake the Papacy as it stands.

Besides, thy King swore to our cardinals  
He meant no harm nor damage to the Church.

Smooth thou his pride — thy signing is but form;

Nay, and should harm come of it, it is the Pope

Will be to blame — not thou. Over and over

He told me thou shouldst pacify the King,

Lest there be battle between Heaven and Earth,

And Earth should get the better — for the time.

Cannot the Pope absolve thee if thou sign?

*Becket.* Have I the orders of the Holy Father?

*Philip de Eleemosyna.* Orders, my lord — why, no; for what am I?

The secret whisper of the Holy Father. Thou, that hast been a statesman, couldst thou always

Blurt thy free mind to the air?

*Becket.* If Rome be feeble, then should I be firm.

*Philip.* Take it not that way — balk not the Pope's will.

When he hath shaken off the Emperor,  
He heads the Church against the King

with thee.

*Richard de Hastings (kneeling).*  
Becket, I am the oldest of the Templars;

I knew thy father; he would be mine age  
Had he lived now; think of me as thy

father!

Behold thy father kneeling to thee,  
Becket.

Submit; I promise thee on my salvation  
That thou wilt hear no more o' the

customs.

*Becket.* What!  
Hath Henry told thee? hast thou talk'd

with him?

*Another Templar (kneeling).* Father,  
I am the youngest of the Tem-

plars,  
Look on me as I were thy bodily son,  
For, like a son, I lift my hands to thee.

*Philip.* Wilt thou hold out for ever,  
Thomas Becket?

Dost thou not hear?  
*Becket (signs).* Why — there then —

there — I sign,  
And swear to obey the customs.

*Foliot.* Is it thy will,  
My lord Archbishop, that we too should

sign?

*Becket.* O ay, by that canonical obedience  
Thou still hast owed thy father, Gilbert Foliot.

*Foliot.* Loyally and with good faith, my lord Archbishop?

*Becket.* O ay, with all that loyalty and good faith  
Thou still hast shown thy primate, Gilbert Foliot.

[*Becket draws apart with Herbert.*  
*Herbert,* *Herbert,* have I betray'd the Church?

I'll have the paper back — blot out my name.

*Herbert.* Too late, my lord: you see they are signing there.

*Becket.* False to myself — it is the will of God

To break me, prove me nothing of myself!

This Almoner hath tasted Henry's gold.  
The cardinals have finger'd Henry's gold.  
And Rome is venal ev'n to rottenness.  
I see it, I see it.

I am no soldier, as he said — at least  
No leader. *Herbert,* till I hear from the Pope

I will suspend myself from all my functions.

If fast and prayer, the lacerating scourge —

*Foliot (from the table).* My lord Archbishop, thou hast yet to seal.

*Becket.* First, Foliot, let me see what I have sign'd. [*Goes to the table.*

What, this! and this! — what! new and old together!

Seal? If a seraph shouted from the sun,  
And bade me seal against the rights of the Church,

I would anathematise him. I will not seal.  
[*Exit with Herbert.*

*Enter KING HENRY.*

*Henry.* Where's Thomas? hath he sign'd? show me the papers!

Sign'd and not seal'd! How's that?  
*John of Oxford.* He would not seal.

And when he sign'd, his face was stormy-red —

Shame, wrath, I know not what. He sat down there

And dropt it in his hands, and then a paleness,

Like the wan twilight after sunset, crept  
Up even to the tonsure, and he groan'd,  
'False to myself! It is the will of God!'

*Henry.* God's will be what it will,  
the man shall seal,

Or I will seal his doom. My burgher's son —

Nay, if I cannot break him as the prelate,  
I'll crush him as the subject. Send for him back. [*Sits on his throne.*

Barons and bishops of our realm of England,

After the nineteen winters of King Stephen —

A reign which was no reign, when none could sit

By his own hearth in peace; when murder common

As nature's death, like Egypt's plague, had fill'd

All things with blood; when every doorway blush'd,

Dash'd red with that unhallow'd passover;  
When every baron ground his blade in blood;

The household dough was kneaded up with blood;

The mill wheel turn'd in blood; the wholesome plow

Lay rusting in the furrow's yellow weeds,  
Till famine dwarf'd the race — I came, your King!

Nor dwell alone, like a soft lord of the East,

In mine own hall, and sucking thro' fools' ears

The flatteries of corruption — went abroad  
Thro' all my counties, spied my people's ways;

Yea, heard the churl against the baron — yea,

And did him justice; sat in mine own courts

Judging my judges, that had found a King

Who rang'd confusions, made the twilight day.

And struck a shape from out the vague, and law

From madness. And the event — our fallows till'd,

Much corn, repeopled towns, a realm again.

So far my course, albeit not glassy-smooth,

Had prosper'd in the main, but suddenly Jarr'd on this rock. A cleric violated The daughter of his host, and murder'd him.

Bishops — York, London, Chichester, Westminster —

Ye haled this tonsured devil into your courts;

But since your canon will not let you take Life for a life, ye but degraded him Where I had hang'd him. What doth hard murder care

For degradation? and that made me muse,

Being bounden by my coronation oath To do men justice. Look to it, your own selves!

Say that a cleric murder'd an archbishop, What could ye do? Degrade, imprison him —

Not death for death.

*John of Oxford.* But I, my liege, could swear, To death for death.

*Henry.* And, looking thro' my reign, I found a hundred ghastly murders done By men, the scum and offal of the Church;

Then, glancing thro' the story of this realm,

I came on certain wholesome usages, Lost in desuetude, of my grandsire's day, Good royal customs — had them written fair

For John of Oxford here to read to you.

*John of Oxford.* And I can easily swear to these as being The King's will and God's will and justice; yet

I could but read a part to-day, because —

*Fitzurse.* Because my lord of Canterbury —

*De Tracy.* Ay, This lord of Canterbury —

*De Brito.* As is his wont Too much of late whene'er your royal rights

Are mooted in our councils —

*Fitzurse.* — made an uproar.

*Henry.* And Becket had my bosom on all this;

If ever man by bonds of gratefulness — I raised him from the puddle of the gutter,

I made him porcelain from the clay of the city —

Thought that I knew him, err'd thro' love of him,

Hoped, were he chosen archbishop, Church and Crown,

Two sisters gliding in an equal dance, Two rivers gently flowing side by side — But no!

The bird that moults sings the same song again,

The snake that sloughs comes out a snake again.

Snake — ay, but he that lookt a fangless one,

Issues a venomous adder.

For he, when having doff'd the Chancellor's robe —

Flung the Great Seal of England in my face —

Claim'd some of our crown lands for Canterbury —

My comrade, boon companion, my com-reveller,

The master of his master, the King's king. —

God's eyes! I had meant to make him all but king.

Chancellor-Archbishop, he might well have sway'd

All England under Henry, the young King,

When I was hence. What did the traitor say?

False to himself, but ten-fold false to me! The will of God — why, then it is my will —

Is he coming?

*Messenger (entering).* With a crowd of worshippers,

And holds his cross before him thro' the crowd,

As one that puts himself in sanctuary.

*Henry.* His cross!

*Roger of York.* His cross! I'll front him, cross to cross.

[*Exit Roger of York.*]

*Henry.* His cross! it is the traitor  
that imputes  
Treachery to his King!  
It is not safe for me to look upon him.  
Away — with me!

[*Goes in with his Barons to the  
Council-Chamber, the door of  
which is left open.*]

*Enter* BECKET, holding his cross of silver  
before him. *The BISHOPS come round  
him.*

*Hereford.* The King will not abide  
thee with thy cross.  
Permit me, my good lord, to bear it for  
thee,  
Being thy chaplain.

*Becket.* No: it must protect me.

*Herbert.* As once he bore the stand-  
ard of the Angles,  
So now he bears the standard of the  
angels.

*Foliot.* I am the Dean of the province:  
let me bear it.

Make not thy King a traitorous murderer.

*Becket.* Did not your barons draw  
their swords against me?

*Enter* ROGER OF YORK, with his cross,  
advancing to BECKET.

*Becket.* Wherefore dost thou presume  
to bear thy cross,  
Against the solemn ordinance from Rome,  
Out of thy province?

*Roger of York.* Why dost thou pre-  
sume,  
Arm'd with thy cross, to come before the  
King?

If Canterbury bring his cross to court,  
Let York bear his to mate with Canter-  
bury.

*Foliot (seizing hold of Becket's cross).*

Nay, nay, my lord, thou must not  
brave the King.

Nay, let me have it. I will have it!

*Becket.* Away!

[*Flinging him off.*]

*Foliot.* He fasts, they say, this mitred  
Hercules!

He fast! is that an arm of fast? My  
lord,

Hadst thou not sign'd, I had gone along  
with thee;

But thou the shepherd hast betray'd the  
sheep,  
And thou art perjured, and thou wilt not  
seal.

As Chancellor thou wast against the  
Church,  
Now as Archbishop goest against the  
King;

For, like a fool, thou knowst no middle  
way.

Ay, ay! but art thou stronger than the  
King?

*Becket.* Strong — not in mine own  
self, but Heaven; true  
To either function, holding it; and thou  
Fast, scourge thyself, and mortify thy  
flesh,

Not spirit — thou remainest Gilbert Foliot,  
A worldly follower of the worldly strong.  
I, bearing this great ensign, make it clear  
Under what Prince I fight.

*Foliot.* My lord of York,  
Let us go in to the Council, where our  
bishops

And our great lords will sit in judgment  
on him.

*Becket.* Sons sit in judgment on their  
father! — then

The spire of Holy Church may prick the  
graves —

Her cryt among the stars. Sign? seal?  
I promised

The King to obey these customs, not yet  
written,

Saving mine order; true too, that when  
written

I sign'd them — being a fool, as Foliot  
call'd me.

I hold not by my signing. Get ye hence,  
Tell what I say to the King.

[*Exeunt* Hereford, Foliot, and other  
Bishops.

*Roger of York.* The Church  
will hate thee. [*Exit.*]

*Becket.* Serve my best friend and  
make him my worst foe;

Fight for the Church, and set the Church  
against me!

*Herbert.* To be honest is to set all  
knaves against thee.

Ah! Thomas, excommunicate them all!

*Hereford (re-entering).* I cannot  
brook the turmoil thou hast raised.

I would, my lord Thomas of Canterbury,  
Thou wert plain Thomas and not Canter-  
bury,

Or that thou wouldst deliver Canterbury  
To our King's hands<sup>o</sup> again, and be at  
peace.

*Hilary (re-entering)*. For hath not  
thine ambition set the Church  
This day between the hammer and the  
anvil —

Fealty to the King, obedience to thyself?  
*Herbert*. What say the bishops?

*Hilary*. Some have pleaded for him,  
But the King rages — most are with the  
King;

And some are reeds, that one time sway  
to the current,

And to the wind another. But we hold  
Thou art forsworn; and no forsworn  
Archbishop

Shall helm the Church. We therefore  
place ourselves

Under the shield and safeguard of the  
Pope,

And cite thee to appear before the Pope,  
And answer thine accusers. . . . Art  
thou deaf?

*Becket*. I hear you. [*Clash of arms.*]

*Hilary*. Dost thou hear those others?

*Becket*. Ay!

*Roger of York (re-entering)*. The  
King's 'God's eyes!' come now  
so thick and fast,

We fear that he may reave thee of thine  
own.

Come on, come on! it is not fit for us  
To see the proud Archbishop mutilated.  
Say that he blind thee and tear out thy  
tongue.

*Becket*. So be it. He begins at top  
with me:

They crucified St. Peter downward.

*Roger of York*. Nay,

But for their sake who stagger betwixt  
thine

Appeal, and Henry's anger, yield.

*Becket*. Hence, Satan!

[*Exit Roger of York.*]

*Fitzurse (re-entering)*. My lord, the  
King demands three hundred  
marks,

Due from his castles of Berkhamstead and  
Eye

When thou thereof wast warden.

*Becket*. Tell the King  
I spent thrice that in fortifying his castles.

*De Tracy (re-entering)*. My lord, the  
King demands seven hundred  
marks,

Lent at the siege of Thoulouse by the  
King.

*Becket*. I led seven hundred knights  
and fought his wars.

*De Brito (re-entering)*. My lord, the  
King demands five hundred marks,  
Advanced thee at his instance by the  
Jews,

For which the King was bound security.

*Becket*. I thought it was a gift; I  
thought it was a gift.

*Enter LORD LEICESTER (followed by  
BARONS and BISHOPS).*

*Leicester*. My lord, I come unwillingly.  
The King

Demands a strict account of all those  
revenues

From all the vacant sees and abbasies,  
Which came into thy hands when Chan-  
cellor.

*Becket*. How much might that amount  
to, my lord Leicester?

*Leicester*. Some thirty — forty thou-  
sand silver marks.

*Becket*. Are these your customs? O  
my good lord Leicester,  
The King and I were brothers. All I  
had

I lavish'd for the glory of the King;  
I shone from him, for him, his glory, his  
Reflection: now the glory of the Church  
Hath swallow'd up the glory of the King;  
I am his no more, but hers. Grant me  
one day

To ponder these demands.

*Leicester*. Hear first thy sentence!  
The King and all his lords —

*Becket*. Son, first hear me!

*Leicester*. Nay, nay, canst thou, that  
holdest thine estates

In fee and barony of the King, decline  
The judgment of the King?

*Becket*. The King! I hold  
Nothing in fee and barony of the King.

Whatever the Church owns — she holds  
it in

Free and perpetual alms, unsubject to  
Onë earthly sceptre.

*Leicester.* Nay, but hear thy judgment.  
The King and all his barons —

*Becket.* Judgment! Barons!  
Who but the bridegroom dares to judge  
the bride,  
Or he the bridegroom may appoint? Not  
he

That is not of the house, but from the  
street  
Stain'd with the mire thereof.

I had been so true  
To Henry and mine office that the King  
Would throne me in the great Arch-  
bishoprick:

And I, that knew mine own infirmity,  
For the King's pleasure rather than God's  
cause

Took it upon me — err'd thro' love of  
him.

Now therefore God from me withdraws  
Himself,

And the King too.

What! forty thousand marks!  
Why thou, the King, the Pope, the  
Saints, the world,

Know that when made Archbishop I was  
freed,

Before the Prince and chief Justiciary,  
From every bond and debt and obligation  
Incurr'd as Chancellor.

Hear me, son.

As gold  
Outvalues dross, light darkness, Abel  
Cain,

The soul the body, and the Church the  
Throne,

I charge thee, upon pain of mine anath-  
ema,

That thou obey, not me, but God in me,  
Rather than Henry. I refuse to stand  
By the King's censure, make my cry to the  
Pope,

By whom I will be judged; refer myself,  
The King, these customs, all the Church,  
to him,

And under his authority — I depart.

[*Going.*

[*Leicester looks at him doubtingly.*  
Am I a prisoner?

*Leicester.* By St. Lazarus, no!  
I am confounded by thee. Go in peace.

*De Broc.* In peace now — but after.  
Take that for earnest.

[*Flings a bone at him from the rushes.*

*De Brito, Fitzurse, De Tracy, and  
others (flinging wisps of rushes).* Ay,  
go in peace, caitiff, caitiff! And that  
too, perjured prelate — and that, turncoat  
shaveling! There, there, there! traitor,  
traitor, traitor!

*Becket.* Mannerless wolves!

[*Turning and facing them.*

*Herbert.* Enough, my lord, enough!

*Becket.* Barons of England and of  
Normandy,  
When what ye shake at doth but seem to  
fly,

True test of coward, ye follow with a yell.  
But I that threw the mightiest knight of  
France,

Sir Engelram de Trie, —

*Herbert.* Enough, my lord.

*Becket.* More than enough. I play  
the fool again.

*Enter HERALD.*

*Herald.* The King commands you,  
upon pain of death,  
That none should wrong or injure your  
Archbishop.

*Foliot.* Deal gently with the young  
man Absalom.

[*Great doors of the Hall at the back  
open, and discover a crowd. They  
shout:*

Blessed is he that cometh in the name of  
the Lord!

SCENE IV. — REFECTORY OF THE  
MONASTERY AT NORTHAMPTON.

*A banquet on the Tables.*

*Enter BECKET. BECKET'S RETAINERS.*

*1st Retainer.* Do thou speak first.

*2nd Retainer.* Nay, thou! Nay,  
thou! Hast not thou drawn the short  
straw?

*1st Retainer.* My lord Archbishop,  
wilt thou permit us —

*Becket.* To speak without stammering  
and like a free man? Ay.

*1st Retainer.* My lord, permit us then  
to leave thy service.



*Becket.* When?

*1st Retainer.* Now.

*Becket.* To-night?

*1st Retainer.* To-night, my lord.

*Becket.* And why?

*1st Retainer.* My lord, we leave thee not without tears.

*Becket.* Tears? Why not stay with me then?

*1st Retainer.* My lord, we cannot yield thee an answer altogether to thy satisfaction.

*Becket.* I warrant you, or your own either. Shall I find you one? The King hath frowned upon me.

*1st Retainer.* That is not altogether our answer, my lord.

*Becket.* No; yet all but all. Go, go! Ye have eaten of my dish and drunken of my cup for a dozen years.

*1st Retainer.* And so we have. We mean thee no wrong. Wilt thou not say, 'God bless you,' ere we go?

*Becket.* God bless you all! God redder your pale blood! But mine is human-red; and when ye shall hear it is poured out upon earth, and see it mounting to Heaven, my God bless you, that seems sweet to you now, will blast and blind you like a curse.

*1st Retainer.* We hope not, my lord. Our humblest thanks for your blessing. Farewell! [*Exeunt Retainers.*]

*Becket.* Farewell, friends! farewell, swallows! I wrong the bird; she leaves only the nest she built, they leave the builder. Why? Am I to be murdered to-night? [*Knocking at the door.*]

*Attendant.* Here is a missive left at the gate by one from the castle.

*Becket.* Cornwall's hand or Leicester's: they write marvellously alike.

[*Reading.*]

'Fly at once to France, to King Louis of France: there be those about our King who would have thy blood.'

Was not my lord of Leicester bidden to our supper?

*Attendant.* Ay, my lord, and divers other earls and barons. But the hour is past, and our brother, Master Cook,

he makes moan that all be a-getting cold.

*Becket.* And I make my moan along with him. Cold after warm, winter after summer, and the golden leaves, these earls and barons, that clung to me, frosted off me by the first cold frown of the King. Cold, but look how the table steams, like a heathen altar; nay, like the altar at Jerusalem. Shall God's good gifts be wasted? None of them here! Call in the poor from the streets, and let them feast.

*Herbert.* That is the parable of our blessed Lord.

*Becket.* And why should not the parable of our blessed Lord be acted again? Call in the poor! The Church is ever at variance with the kings, and ever at one with the poor. I marked a group of lazars in the marketplace—half-rag, half-sore—beggars, poor rogues (Heaven bless 'em) who never saw nor dreamed of such a banquet. I will amaze them. Call them in, I say. They shall henceforward be my earls and barons—our lords and masters in Christ Jesus. [*Exit Herbert.*]

If the King hold his purpose, I am myself a beggar. Forty thousand marks! forty thousand devils—and these craven bishops!

*Enter a POOR MAN with his dog.*

*Man.* My lord Archbishop, may I come in with my poor friend, my dog? The King's verdurer caught him a-hunting in the forest, and cut off his paws. The dog followed his calling, my lord. I ha' carried him ever so many miles in my arms, and he licks my face and moans and cries out against the King.

*Becket.* Better thy dog than thee. The King's courts would use thee worse than thy dog—they are too bloody. Were the Church king, it would be otherwise. Poor beast! poor beast! set him down. I will bind up his wounds with my napkin. Give him a bone, give him a bone! Who misuses a dog would misuse a child—they cannot speak for themselves. Past help! his paws are past help. God help him!

*Enter the BEGGARS (and seat themselves at the Tables). BECKET and HERBERT wait upon them.*

*1st Beggar.* Swine, sheep, ox—here's a French supper. When thieves fall out, honest men—

*2nd Beggar.* Is the Archbishop a thief who gives thee thy supper?

*1st Beggar.* Well, then, how does it go? When honest men fall out, thieves—no, it can't be that.

*2nd Beggar.* Who stole the widow's one sitting hen o' Sunday, when she was at mass?

*1st Beggar.* Come, come! thou hadst thy share on her. Sitting hen! Our Lord Becket's our great sitting-hen cock, and we shouldn't ha' been sitting here if the barons and bishops hadn't been a-sitting on the Archbishop.

*Becket.* Ay, the princes sat in judgment against me, and the Lord hath prepared your table—*Sederunt principes, ederunt pauperes.*

*A voice.* Becket, beware of the knife!

*Becket.* Who spoke?

*3rd Beggar.* Nobody, my lord. What's that, my lord?

*Becket.* Venison.

*3rd Beggar.* Venison?

*Becket.* Buck; deer, as you call it.

*3rd Beggar.* King's meat! By the Lord, won't we pray for your lordship!

*Becket.* And, my children, your prayers will do more for me in the day of peril that dawns darkly and drearily over the house of God—yea, and in the day of judgment also, than the swords of the craven sycophants would have done had they remained true to me whose bread they have partaken. I must leave you to your banquet. Feed, feast, and be merry. Herbert, for the sake of the Church itself, if not for my own, I must fly to France to-night. Come with me.

[*Exit with Herbert.*]

*3rd Beggar.* Here—all of you—my lord's health (*they drink*). Well—if that isn't goodly wine—

*1st Beggar.* Then there isn't a goodly wench to serve him with it: they were fighting for her to-day in the street.

*3rd Beggar.* Peace!

*1st Beggar.* The black sheep baaed to the miller's ewe-lamb, The miller's away for to-night. Black sheep, quoth she, too black a sin for me.

And what said the black sheep, my masters?

We can make a black sin white.

*3rd Beggar.* Peace!

*1st Beggar.* 'Ewe lamb, ewe lamb, I am here by the dam.'

But the miller came home that night, And so dusted his back with the meal in his sack,

That he made the black sheep white.

*3rd Beggar.* Be we not of the family? be we not a-supping with the head of the family? be we not in my lord's own refractory? Out from among us; thou art our black sheep.

*Enter the four KNIGHTS.*

*Fitzurse.* Sheep, said he? And sheep without the shepherd, too. Where is my lord Archbishop? Thou the lustiest and lousiest of this Cain's brotherhood, answer.

*3rd Beggar.* With Cain's answer, my lord. Am I his keeper? Thou shouldst call him Cain, not me.

*Fitzurse.* So I do, for he would murder his brother the State.

*3rd Beggar (rising and advancing).* No, my lord; but because the Lord hath set his mark upon him that no man should murder him.

*Fitzurse.* Where is he? where is he?

*3rd Beggar.* With Cain belike, in the land of Nod, or in the land of France for aught I know.

*Fitzurse.* France! Ha! De Morville, Tracy, Brito—fled is he? Cross swords all of you! swear to follow him! Remember the Queen!

[*The four Knights cross their swords.*]

*De Brito.* They mock us; he is here.

[*All the Beggars rise and advance upon them.*]

*Fitzurse.* Come, you filthy knaves, let us pass.

*3rd Beggar.* Nay, my lord, let us pass. We be a-gojng home after our supper in all humbleness, my lord; for

the Archbishop loves humbleness, my lord; and though we be fifty to four, we daren't fight you with our crutches, my lord. There now, if thou hast not laid hands upon me! and my fellows know that I am all one scale like a fish. I pray God I haven't given thee my leprosy, my lord.

[Fitzurse *shrinks from him and another presses upon De Brito.*

*De Brito.* Away, dog!

*4th Beggar.* And I was bit by a mad dog o' Friday, an' I be half dog already by this token, that tho' I can drink wine I cannot bide water, my lord; and I want to bite, I want to bite, and they do say the very breath catches.

*De Brito.* Insolent clown! Shall I smite him with the edge of the sword?

*De Morville.* No, nor with the flat of it either. Smite the shepherd and the sheep are scattered. Smite the sheep and the shepherd will excommunicate thee.

*De Brito.* Yet my fingers itch to beat him into nothing.

*5th Beggar.* So do mine, my lord. I was born with it, and sulphur won't bring it out o' me. But for all that the Archbishop washed my feet o' Tuesday. He likes it, my lord.

*6th Beggar.* And see here, my lord, this rag fro' the gangrene i' my leg. It's humbling—it smells o' human natur'. Wilt thou smell it, my lord? for the Archbishop likes the smell on it, my lord; for I be his lord and master i' Christ, my lord.

*De Morville.* Faugh! we shall all be poisoned. Let us go.

[*They draw back, Beggars following.*

*7th Beggar.* My lord, I ha' three sisters a-dying at home o' the sweating sickness. They be dead while I be a-suppering.

*8th Beggar.* And I ha' nine darters i' the spital that be dead ten times o'er i' one day wi' the putrid fever; and I bring the taint on it along wi' me, for the Archbishop likes it, my lord.

[*Pressing upon the Knights till they disappear thro' the door.*

*3rd Beggar.* Crutches, and itches, and

leprosy, and ulcers, and gangrenes, and running sores, praise ye the Lord, for to-night ye have saved our Archbishop!

*1st Beggar.* I'll go back again. I hain't half done yet.

*Herbert of Bosham (entering).* My friends, the Archbishop bids you good night. He hath retired to rest, and being in great jeopardy of his life, he hath made his bed between the altars, from whence he sends me to bid you this night pray for him who hath fed you in the wilderness.

*3rd Beggar.* So we will—so we will, I warrant thee. Becket shall be king, and the Holy Father shall be king, and the world shall live by the King's venison and the bread o' the Lord, and there shall be no more poor for ever. Hurrah! Vive le Roy! That's the English of it.

## ACT II.

### SCENE I.—ROSAMUND'S BOWER.

*A Garden of Flowers. In the midst a bank of wild-flowers with a bench before it.*

*Voices heard singing among the trees.*

#### *Duet.*

1. Is it the wind of the dawn that I hear in the pine overhead?

2. No; but the voice of the deep as it hollows the cliffs of the land.

1. Is there a voice coming up with the voice of the deep from the strand, One coming up with a song in the flush of the glimmering red?

2. Love that is born of the deep coming up with the sun from the sea.

1. Love that can shape or can shatter a life till the life shall have fled?

2. Nay, let us welcome him, Love that can lift up a life from the dead.

1. Keep him away from the lone little isle. Let us be, let us be.

2. Nay, let him make it his own, let him reign in it—he, it is he,

Love that is born of the deep coming up with the sun from the sea.

*Enter HENRY and ROSAMUND.*

*Rosamund.* Be friends with him again  
—I do beseech thee.

*Henry.* With Becket? I have but  
one hour with thee—

Sceptre and crozier clashing, and the  
mitre  
Grappling the crown—and when I flee  
from this

For a gasp of freer air, a breathing-  
while

To rest upon thy bosom and forget  
him—

Why thou, my bird, thou pipest Becket,  
Becket—

Yea, thou my golden dream of Love's  
own bower,

Must be the nightmare breaking on my  
peace

With 'Becket.'

*Rosamund.* O my life's life, not to  
smile

Is all but death to me. My sun, no  
cloud!

Let there not be one frown in this one  
hour.

Out of the many thine, let this be mine!  
Look rather thou all-royal as when first  
I met thee.

*Henry.* Where was that?

*Rosamund.* Forgetting that  
Forgets me too.

*Henry.* Nay, I remember it well.  
There on the moors.

*Rosamund.* And in a narrow path.  
A plover flew before thee. Then I saw  
Thy high black steed among the flaming  
furze,

Like sudden night in the main glare of  
day.

And from that height something was  
said to me

I knew not what.

*Henry.* I ask'd the way.

*Rosamund.* I think so.  
So I lost mine.

*Henry.* Thou wast too shamed to  
answer.

*Rosamund.* Too scared—so young!

*Henry.* The rosebud of my rose!—  
Well, well, no more of *him*—I have sent  
his folk,

His kin, all his belongings, overseas;  
Age, orphans, and babe-breasting mothers  
—all

By hundreds to him—there to beg,  
starve, die—

So that the fool King Louis feed them  
not.

The man shall feel that I can strike him  
yet.

*Rosamund.* Babes, orphans, mothers!  
is that royal, Sire?

*Henry.* And I have been as royal  
with the Church.

He shelter'd in the Abbey of Pontigny.  
There wore his time studying the canon  
law

To work it against me. But since he  
cursed

My friends at Veselay, I have let them  
know,

That if they keep him longer as their  
guest,

I scatter all their cowls to all the hells.

*Rosamund.* And is that altogether  
royal?

*Henry.* Traitor!

*Rosamund.* A faithful traitress to thy  
royal fame.

*Henry.* Fame! what care I for fame?  
Spite, ignorance, envy;

Yea, honesty too, paint her what way  
they will.

Fame of to-day is infamy to-morrow;

Infamy of to-day is fame to-morrow;

And round and round again. What  
matters? Royal—

I mean to leave the royalty of my crown  
Unlessen'd to mine heirs.

*Rosamund.* Still—thy fame too:  
I say that should be royal.

*Henry.* And I say,

I care not for thy saying.

*Rosamund.* And I say,

I care not for *thy* saying. A greater  
King

Than thou art, Love, who cares not for  
the word,

Makes 'care not'—care. There have I  
spoken true?

*Henry.* Care dwell with me for ever,  
when I cease

To care for thee as ever!

*Rosamund.* No need! no need! . . .

There is a bench. Come, wilt thou sit?

. . . My bank  
Of wild-flowers (*he sits*). At thy feet!

[*She sits at his feet.*

*Henry.* I bade them clear  
A royal pleasaunce for thee, in the wood,  
Not leave these countryfolk at court.

*Rosamund.* I brought them  
In from the wood, and set them here. I  
love them

More than the garden flowers, that seem  
at most

Sweet guests, or foreign cousins, not half  
speaking

The language of the land. I love *them*  
too,

Yes. But, my liege, I am sure, of all  
the roses —

Shame fall on those who gave it a dog's  
name —

This wild one (*picking a briar-rose*) —  
nay, I shall not prick myself —

Is sweetest. Do but smell!

*Henry.* Thou rose of the world!  
Thou rose of all the roses! [*Muttering.*  
I am not worthy of her — this beast-  
body

That God has plunged my soul in — I,  
that taking

The Fiend's advantage of a throne, so  
long

Have wander'd among women, — a foul  
stream

Thro' fever-breeding levels, — at her side,  
Among these happy dales, run clearer,

drop  
The mud I carried, like yon brook, and  
glass

The faithful face of heaven —

[*Looking at her, and unconsciously aloud,*  
— thine! thine!

*Rosamund.* I know it.

*Henry* (*muttering*). Not hers. We  
have but one bond, her hate of  
Becket.

*Rosamund* (*half hearing*). Nay! nay!  
what art thou muttering? I hate  
Becket?

*Henry* (*muttering*). A sane and  
natural loathing for a soul

Purer, and truer and nobler than herself;  
And mine a bitterer illegitimate hate,  
A bastard hate born of a former love.

*Rosamund.* My fault to name him!

O let the hand of one

To whom thy voice is all her music, stay it  
But for a breath.

[*Puts her hand before his lips.*

Speak only of thy love.

Why there — like some loud beggar at  
thy gate —

The happy boldness of this hand hath  
won it

Love's alms, thy kiss (*looking at her hand*)  
— Sacred! I'll kiss it too.

[*Kissing it.*

There! wherefore dost thou so peruse it?  
Nay,

There may be crosses in my line of life.

*Henry.* Not half *her* hand — no hand  
to mate with *her*,

If it should come to that.

*Rosamund.* With her? with whom?

*Henry.* Life on the hand is naked  
gipsy-stuff;

Life on the face, the brows — clear inno-  
cence!

Vein'd marble — not a furrow yet — and  
hers [*Muttering.*

Crost and recrost, a venomous spider's  
web —

*Rosamund* (*springing up*). Out of the  
cloud, my Sun — out of the eclipse

Narrowing my golden hour!

*Henry.* O Rosamund,

I would be true — would tell thee all —  
and something

I had to say — I love thee none the less —  
Which will so vex thee.

*Rosamund.* Something against *me*?

*Henry.* No, no, against myself.

*Rosamund.* I will not hear it.

Come, come, mine hour! I bargain for  
mine hour.

I'll call thee little Geoffrey.

*Henry.* Call him!

*Rosamund.* Geoffrey!

*Enter* GEOFFREY.

*Henry.* How the boy grows!

*Rosamund.* Ay, and his brows are  
thine;

The mouth is only Clifford, my dear  
father.

*Geoffrey.* My liege, what hast thou  
brought me?

*Henry.* Venal imp!  
What say'st thou to the Chancellorship of  
England?

*Geoffrey.* O yes, my liege.

*Henry.* 'O yes, my liege!' He  
speaks

As if it were a cake of gingerbread.

Dost thou know, my boy, what it is to  
be Chancellor of England?

*Geoffrey.* Something good, or thou  
wouldst not give it me.

*Henry.* It is, my boy, to side with  
the King when Chancellor, and then to  
be made Archbishop and go against the  
King who made him, and turn the world  
upside down.

*Geoffrey.* I won't have it then. Nay,  
but give it me, and I promise thee not to  
turn the world upside down.

*Henry (giving him a ball).* Here is a  
ball, my boy, thy world, to turn anyway  
and play with as thou wilt—which is more  
than I can do with mine. Go try it, play.  
[*Exit Geoffrey.*]

A pretty lusty boy.

*Rosamund.* So like to thee;  
Like to be liker.

*Henry.* Not in my chin, I hope!  
That threatens double.

*Rosamund.* Thou art manlike  
perfect.

*Henry.* Ay, ay, no doubt; and were  
I humpt behind,

Thou'dst say as much—the goodly way  
of women

Who love, for which I love them. May  
God grant

No ill befall or him or thee when I  
Am gone.

*Rosamund.* Is he thy enemy?

*Henry.* He? who? ay!

*Rosamund.* Thine enemy knows the  
secret of my bower.

*Henry.* And I could tear him asunder  
with wild horses

Before he would betray it. Nay—no fear!  
More like is he to excommunicate me.

*Rosamund.* And I would creep, crawl  
over knife-edge flint

Barefoot, a hundred leagues, to stay his  
hand

Before he flash'd the bolt.

*Henry.* And when he flash'd it

Shrink from me, like a daughter of the  
Church.

*Rosamund.* Ay, but he will not.

*Henry.* Ay! but if he did?

*Rosamund.* O then! O then! I  
almost fear to say

That my poor heretic heart would ex-  
communicate

His excommunication, clinging to thee  
Closer than ever.

*Henry (raising Rosamund and kissing  
her).* My brave-hearted Rose!

Hath he ever been to see thee?

*Rosamund.* Here? not he.

And it is so lonely here—no confessor.

*Henry.* Thou shalt confess all thy  
sweet sins to me.

*Rosamund.* Besides, we came away  
in such a heat,

I brought not ev'n my crucifix.

*Henry.* Take this.

[*Giving her the Crucifix which Elea-  
nor gave him.*]

*Rosamund.* O beautiful! May I have  
it as mine, till mine

Be mine again?

*Henry (throwing it round her neck).*

Thine—as I am—till death!

*Rosamund.* Death? no! I'll have it  
with me in my shroud,

And wake with it, and show it to all the  
Saints.

*Henry.* Nay—I must go; but when  
thou layest thy lip

To this, remembering One who died for  
thee,

Remember also one who lives for thee  
Out there in France; for I must hence  
to brave

The Pope, King Louis, and this turbu-  
lent priest.

*Rosamund (kneeling).* O by thy love  
for me, all mine for thee,

Fling not thy soul into the flames of hell:  
I kneel to thee—be friends with him  
again.

*Henry.* Look, look! if little Geoffrey  
have not tost

His ball into the brook! makes after it too  
To find it. Why, the child will drown  
himself.

*Rosamund.* Geoffrey! Geoffrey!

[*Exeunt.*]



## SCENE II.—MONTMIRAIL.

'The Meeting of the Kings.' JOHN OF OXFORD and HENRY. *Crowd in the distance.*

*John of Oxford.* You have not crown'd young Henry yet, my liege?

*Henry.* Crown'd! by God's eyes, we will not have him crown'd.

I spoke of late to the boy, he answer'd me,

As if he wore the crown already — No, We will not have him crown'd.

'Tis true what Becket told me, that the mother

Would make him play his kingship against mine.

*John of Oxford.* Not have him crown'd?

*Henry.* Not now — not yet! and Becket —

Becket should crown him were he crown'd at all:

But, since we would be lord of our own manor,

This Canterbury, like a wounded deer, Has fled our presence and our feeding-grounds.

*John of Oxford.* Cannot a smooth tongue lick him whole again To serve your will?

*Henry.* He hates my will, not me.

*John of Oxford.* There's York, my liege.

*Henry.* But England scarce would hold

Young Henry king, if only crown'd by York,

And that would stilt up York to twice himself.

There is a movement yonder in the crowd —

See if our pious — what shall I call him, John? —

Husband-in-law, our smooth-shorn suzerain,

Be yet within the field.

*John of Oxford.* I will. [*Exit.*]

*Henry.* Ay! Ay!

Mince and go back! his politic Holiness Hath all but climb'd the Roman perch again,

And we shall hear him presently with clapt wing

Crow over Barbarossa — at last tongue-free

To blast my realms with excommunication And interdict. I must patch up a peace —

A piece in this long-tugged-at, threadbare-worn

Quarrel of Crown and Church — to rend again.

His Holiness cannot steer straight thro' shoals,

Nor I. The citizen's heir hath conquer'd me

For the moment. So we make our peace with him.

*Enter LOUIS.*

Brother of France, what shall be done with Becket?

*Louis.* The holy Thomas! Brother, you have traffick'd

Between the Emperor and the Pope, between

The Pope and Antipope — a perilous game

For men to play with God.

*Henry.* Ay, ay, good brother, They call you the Monk-King.

*Louis.* Who calls me? she That was my wife, now yours? You

have her Duchy,

The point you aim'd at, and pray God she prove

True wife to you. You have had the better of us

In secular matters.

*Henry.* Come, confess, good brother, You did your best or worst to keep her Duchy.

Only the golden Leopard printed in it Such hold-fast claws that you perforce

again

Shrank into France. Tut, tut! did we convene

This conference but to babble of our wives?

They are plagues enough in-door.

*Louis.* We fought in the East, And felt the sun of Antioch scald our

mail, And push'd our lances into Saracen hearts.

We never hounded on the State at home  
To spoil the Church.

*Henry.* How should you see this  
rightly?

*Louis.* Well, well, no more! I am  
proud of my 'Monk-King,'  
Whoever named me; and, brother, Holy  
Church

May rock, but will not wreck, nor our  
Archbishop

Stagger on the slope decks for any rough  
sea

Blown by the breath of kings. We do  
forgive you

For aught you wrought against us.

[*Henry holds up his hand.*

Nay, I pray you,

Do not defend yourself. You will do  
much

To rake out all old dying heats, if you,  
At my requesting, will but look into  
The wrongs you did him, and restore his  
kin,

Reseat him on his throne of Canterbury,  
Be, both, the friends you were.

*Henry.* The friends we were!

Co-mates we were, and had our sport  
together,

Co-kings we were, and made the laws  
together.

The world had never seen the like before.  
You are too cold to know the fashion of it.

Well, well, we will be gentle with him,  
gracious —

Most gracious.

*Enter BECKET, after him, JOHN OF  
OXFORD, ROGER OF YORK, GILBERT  
FOLIOT, DE BROU, FITZURSE, etc.*

Only that the rift he made  
May close between us, here I am wholly  
king,

The word should come from him.

*Becket (kneeling).* Then, my dear liege,  
I here deliver all this controversy  
Into your royal hands.

*Henry.* Ah, Thomas, Thomas,  
Thou art thyself again, Thomas again.

*Becket (rising).* Saving God's honour!

*Henry.* Out upon thee, man!  
Saving the Devil's honour, his yes and no.  
Knights, bishops, earls, this London  
spawn — by Mahound,

I had sooner have been born a Mussul-  
man —

Less clashing with their priests —

I am half-way down the slope — will no  
man stay me?

I dash myself to pieces — I stay myself —  
Puff — it is gone. You, Master Becket,  
you

That owe to me your power over me —  
Nay, nay —

Brother of France, you have taken,  
cherish'd him

Who thief-like fled from his own church  
by night,

No man pursuing. I would have had  
him back.

Take heed he do not turn and rend you  
too:

For whatsoever may displease him — that  
Is clean against God's honour — a shift, a  
trick

Whereby to challenge, face me out of all  
My regal rights. Yet, yet — that none  
may dream

I go against God's honour — ay, or him-  
self

In any reason, choose

A hundred of the wisest heads from  
England,

A hundred, too, from Normandy and  
Anjou:

Let these decide on what was customary  
In olden days, and all the Church of  
France

Decide on their decision, I am content.

More, what the mightiest and the holiest  
Of all his predecessors may have done

Ev'n to the least and meanest of my  
own,

Let him do the same to me — I am con-  
tent.

*Louis.* Ay, ay! the King humbles  
himself enough.

*Becket. (Aside.)* Words! he will  
wriggle out of them like an eel

When the time serves. (*Aloud.*) My  
liegés and my lords,

The thanks of Holy Church are due to  
those

That went before us for their work, which  
we

Inheriting reap an easier harvest.  
Yet —

*Louis.* My lord, will you be greater  
than the Saints,  
More than St. Peter? whom — what is  
it you doubt?

Behold your peace at hand.

*Becket.* I say that those  
Who went before us did not wholly clear  
The deadly growths of earth, which Hell's  
own heat

So dwelt on that they rose and darken'd  
Heaven.

Yet they did much. Would God they  
had torn up all

By the hard root, which shoots again;  
our trial

Had so been less; but, seeing they were  
men

Defective or excessive, must we follow  
All that they overdid or underdid?

Nay, if they were defective as St. Peter  
Denying Christ, who yet defied the  
tyrant,

We hold by his defiance, not his defect.

O good son Louis, do not counsel me,  
No, to suppress God's honour for the sake  
Of any king that breathes. No, God  
forbid!

*Henry.* No! God forbid! and turn  
me Mussulman!

No God but one, and Mahound is his  
prophet.

But for your Christian, look you, you  
shall have

None other God but me — me, Thomas,  
son

Of Gilbert Becket, London merchant.  
Out!

I hear no more. [Exit.]

*Louis.* Our brother's anger puts him,  
Poor man, beside himself — not wise.

My lord,  
We have claspt your cause, believing that  
our brother

Had wrong'd you; but this day he  
proffer'd peace.

You will have war; and tho' we grant  
the Church

King over this world's kings, yet, my  
good lord,

We that are kings are something in this  
world,

And so we pray you, draw yourself from  
under

The wings of France. We shelter you  
no more. [Exit.]

*John of Oxford.* I am glad that  
France hath scouted him at last:

I told the Pope what manner of man he  
was. [Exit.]

*Roger of York.* Yea, since he flouts  
the will of either realm,

Let either cast him away like a dead  
dog! [Exit.]

*Foliot.* Yea, let a stranger spoil his  
heritage,

And let another take his bishoprick!  
[Exit.]

*De Broc.* Our castle, my lord, be-  
longs to Canterbury.

I pray you come and take it. [Exit.]

*Fitzurse.* When you will. [Exit.]

*Becket.* Cursed be John of Oxford,  
Roger of York,

And Gilbert Foliot! cursed those De  
Brocs

That hold our Saltwood Castle from our  
see!

Cursed Fitzurse, and all the rest of them  
That sow this hate between my lord and  
me!

*Voices from the Crowd.* Blessed be  
the Lord Archbishop, who hath with-  
stood two Kings to their faces for the  
honour of God.

*Becket.* Out of the mouths of babes  
and sucklings, praise!

I thank you, sons; when kings but hold  
by crowns,

The crowd that hungers for a crown in  
Heaven

Is my true king.

*Herbert.* Thy true King bade thee be  
A fisher of men; thou hast them in thy  
net.

*Becket.* I am too like the King here;  
both of us

Too headlong for our office. Better have  
been

A fisherman at Bosham, my good Herbert,  
Thy birthplace — the sea-creek — the  
petty rill

That falls into it — the green field — the  
gray church —

The simple lobster-basket, and the  
mesh —

The more or less of daily labour done —

The pretty gaping bills in the home-nest  
Piping for bread — the daily want supplied —

The daily pleasure to supply it.

*Herbert.* Ah, Thomas,  
You had not borne it, no, not for a day.

*Becket.* Well, maybe, no.

*Herbert.* But bear with Walter Map,  
For here he comes to comment on the  
time.

*Enter WALTER MAP.*

*Walter Map.* Pity, my lord, that you  
have quenched the warmth of France to-  
ward you, tho' His Holiness, after much  
smouldering and smoking, be kindled  
again upon your quarter.

*Becket.* Ay, if he do not end in smoke  
again.

*Walter Map.* My lord, the fire, when  
first kindled, said to the smoke, 'Go up,  
my son, straight to Heaven.' And the  
smoke said, 'I go;' but anon the North-  
east took and turned him South-west,  
then the South-west turned him North-  
east, and so of the other winds; but it  
was in him to go up straight if the time  
had been quieter. Your lordship affects  
the unwavering perpendicular; but His  
Holiness, pushed one way by the Em-  
pire and another by England, if he  
move at all, Heaven stay him, is fain to  
diagonalise.

*Herbert.* Diagonalise! thou art a word-  
monger.

Our Thomas never will diagonalise.  
Thou art a jester and a verse-maker.  
Diagonalise!

*Walter Map.* Is the world any the  
worse for my verses if the Latin rhymes  
be rolled out from a full mouth? or any  
harm done to the people if my jest be in  
defence of the Truth?

*Becket.* Ay, if the jest be so done that  
the people

Delight to wallow in the grossness of it,  
Till Truth herself be shamed of her  
defender.

*Non defensoribus istis,* Walter Map.

*Walter Map.* Is that my case? so if  
the city be sick, and I cannot call the  
kennel sweet, your lordship would sus-  
pend me from verse-writing, as you sus-

pended yourself after sub-writing to the  
customs.

*Becket.* I pray God pardon mine in-  
firmity.

*Walter Map.* Nay, my lord, take  
heart; for tho' you suspended yourself,  
the Pope let you down again; and tho'  
you suspend Foliot or another, the Pope  
will not leave them in suspense, for the  
Pope himself is always in suspense, like  
Mahound's coffin hung between heaven  
and earth — always in suspense, like the  
scales, till the weight of Germany or the  
gold of England brings one of them  
down to the dust — always in suspense,  
like the tail of the horologe — to and  
fro — tick-tack — we make the time, we  
keep the time, ay, and we serve the  
time; for I have heard say that if you  
boxed the Pope's ears with a purse, you  
might stagger him, but he would pocket  
the purse. No saying of mine — Jocelyn  
of Salisbury. But the King hath bought  
half the College of Redhats. He warmed  
to you to-day, and you have chilled him  
again. Yet you both love God. Agree  
with him quickly again, even for the sake  
of the Church. My one grain of good  
counsel which you will not swallow. I  
hate a split between old friendships as I  
hate the dirty gap in the face of a Cis-  
tercian monk, that will swallow anything.  
Farewell. [*Exit.*]

*Becket.* Map scoffs at Rome. I all  
but hold with Map.

Save for myself no Rome were left in  
England,

All had been his. Why should this  
Rome, this Rome,

Still choose Barabbas rather than the  
Christ,

Absolve the left-hand thief and damn the  
right?

Take fees of tyranny, wink at sacri-  
lege,

Which even Peter had not dared? con-  
demn

The blameless exile? —

*Herbert.* Thee, thou holy Thomas!  
I would that thou hadst been the Holy  
Father.

*Becket.* I would have done my most  
to keep Rome holy,

I would have made Rome know she still  
is Rome —

Who stands aghast at her eternal self  
And shakes at mortal kings — her vacilla-  
tion,

Avarice, craft — O God, how many an  
innocent

Has left his bones upon the way to Rome  
Unwept, uncared for. Yea — on mine  
own self

The King had had no power except for  
Rome.

'Tis not the King who is guilty of mine  
exile,

But Rome, Rome, Rome!

*Herbert.* My lord, I see this Louis  
Returning, ah! to drive thee from his  
realm.

*Becket.* He said as much before.

Thou art no prophet,

Nor yet a prophet's son.

*Herbert.* Whatever he say,  
Deny not thou God's honour for a king.  
The King looks troubled.

*Re-enter KING LOUIS.*

*Louis.* My dear lord Archbishop,  
I learn but now that those poor Poitevins,  
That in thy cause were stirr'd against  
King Henry,  
Have been, despite his kingly promise  
given

To our own self of pardon, evilly used  
And put to pain. I have lost all trust in  
him.

The Church alone hath eyes — and now  
I see

That I was blind — suffer the phrase —  
surrendering

God's honour to the pleasure of a man.  
Forgive me and absolve me, holy father.

[*Kneels.*]

*Becket.* Son, I absolve thee in the  
name of God.

*Louis (rising).* Return to Sens, where  
we will care for you.

The wine and wealth of all our France  
are yours;

Rest in our realm, and be at peace with  
all.

[*Exeunt.*]

*Voices from the Crowd.* Long live  
the good King Louis! God bless the  
great Archbishop!

*Re-enter HENRY and JOHN OF OXFORD.*

*Henry (looking after King Louis and  
Becket).* Ay, there they go — both  
backs are turn'd to me —

Why then I strike into my former path  
For England, crown young Henry there,  
and make

Our waning Eleanor all but love me!

*John,*

Thou hast served me heretofore with  
Rome — and well.

They call thee John the Swearer.

*John of Oxford.*

For this reason,

That, being ever duteous to the King,  
I evermore have sworn upon his side,  
And ever mean to do it.

*Henry (claps him on the shoulder).*

Honest John!

To Rome again! the storm begins again.  
Spare not thy tongue! be lavish with our  
coins,

Threaten our junction with the Emperor  
— flatter

And fright the Pope — bribe all the Car-  
dinals — leave

Lateran and Vatican in one dust of gold —  
Swear and unswear, state and misstate  
thy best!

I go to have young Henry crown'd by  
York.

### ACT III.

#### SCENE I. — THE BOWER.

*HENRY and ROSAMUND.*

*Henry.* All that you say is just. I  
cannot answer it.

Till better times, when I shall put  
away —

*Rosamund.* What will you put away?

*Henry.* That which you ask me  
Till better times. Let it content you  
now

There is no woman that I love so well.

*Rosamund.* No woman but should be  
content with that —

*Henry.* And one fair child to fondle!

*Rosamund.* O yes, the child  
We waited for so long — heaven's gift at  
last —

And how you doted on him then! To-day  
I almost fear'd your kiss was colder—  
yes—  
But then the child *is* such a child. What  
chance  
That he should ever spread into the man  
Here in our silence? I have done my  
best.  
I am not learn'd.

*Henry.* I am the King, his father,  
And I will look to it. Is our secret ours?  
Have you had any alarm? no stranger?

*Rosamund.* No.  
The warder of the bower hath given  
himself  
Of late to wine. I sometimes think he  
sleeps

When he should watch; and yet what  
fear? the people

Believe the wood enchanted. No one  
comes,

Nor foe nor friend; his fond excess of  
wine

Springs from the loneliness of my poor  
bower,

Which weighs even on me.

*Henry.* Yet these tree-towers,  
Their long bird-echoing minster-aisles,—  
the voice

Of the perpetual brook, these golden  
slopes

Of Solomon-shaming flowers—that was  
your saying,

All pleased you so at first.

*Rosamund.* Not now so much.  
My Anjou bower was scarce as beautiful.  
But you were oftener there. I have none  
but you.

The brook's voice is not yours, and no  
flower, not

The sun himself, should he be changed  
to one,

Could shine away the darkness of that gap  
Left by the lack of love.

*Henry.* The lack of love!

*Rosamund.* Of one we love. Nay, I  
would not be bold,

Yet hoped ere this you might—

[*Looks earnestly at him.*]

*Henry.* Anything further?

*Rosamund.* Only my best bower-  
maiden died of late,

And that old priest whom John of Salis-  
bury trusted

Hath sent another.

*Henry.* Secret?

*Rosamund.* I but ask'd her  
One question, and she prim'd her  
mouth and put

Her hands together—thus—and said,  
God help her,

That she was sworn to silence.

*Henry.* What did you ask her?

*Rosamund.* Some daily something-  
nothing.

*Henry.* Secret, then?

*Rosamund.* I do not love her. Must  
you go, my liege,

So suddenly?

*Henry.* I came to England suddenly,  
And on a great occasion sure to wake

As great a wrath in Becket—

*Rosamund.* Always Becket!  
He always comes between us.

*Henry.* —And to meet it  
I needs must leave as suddenly. It is  
raining,

Put on your hood and see me to the  
bounds. [*Exeunt.*]

*Margery (singing behind scene).*

Babble in bower

Under the rose!

Bee mustn't buzz,

Whoop—but he knows.

Kiss me, little one,

Nobody near!

Grasshopper, grasshopper,

Whoop—you can hear.

Kiss in the bower,

Tit on the tree!

Bird mustn't tell,

Whoop—he can see.

*Enter MARGERY.*

I ha' been but a week here and I ha'  
seen what I ha' seen, for to be sure it's  
no more than a week since our old  
Father Philip that has confessed our  
mother for twenty years, and she was  
hard put to it, and to speak truth, nigh  
at the end of our last crust, and that  
mouldy, and she cried out on him to put



me forth in the world and to make me a woman of the world, and to win my own bread, whereupon he asked our mother if I could keep a quiet tongue i' my head, and not speak till I was spoke to, and I answered for myself that I never spoke more than was needed, and he told me he would advance me to the service of a great lady, and took me ever so far away, and gave me a great pat o' the cheek for a pretty wench, and said it was a pity to blindfold such eyes as mine, and such to be sure they be, but he blinded 'em for all that, and so brought me no-hows as I may say, and the more shame to him after his promise, into a garden and not into the world, and bade me whatever I saw not to speak one word, an' it 'ud be well for me in the end, for there were great ones who would look after me, and to be sure I ha' seen great ones to-day — and then not to speak one word, for that's the rule o' the garden, tho' to be sure if I had been Eve i' the garden I shouldn't ha' minded the apple, for what's an apple, you know, save to a child, and I'm no child, but more a woman o' the world than my lady here, and I ha' seen what I ha' seen — tho' to be sure if I hadn't minded it we should all on us ha' had to go, bless the Saints, wi' bare backs, but the backs 'ud ha' countenanced one another, and belike it 'ud ha' been always summer, and anyhow I am as well-shaped as my lady here, and I ha' seen what I ha' seen, and what's the good of my talking to myself, for here comes my lady (*enter Rosamund*), and, my lady, tho' I shouldn't speak one word, I wish you joy o' the King's brother.

*Rosamund.* What is it you mean?

*Margery.* I mean your Goodman, your husband, my lady, for I saw your ladyship a-parting wi' him even now i' the coppice, when I was a-getting o' bluebells for your ladyship's nose to smell on — and I ha' seen the King once at Oxford, and he's as like the King as fingernail to fingernail, and I thought at first it was the King, only you know the King's married, for King Louis —

*Rosamund.* Married!

*Margery.* Years and years, my lady, for her husband, King Louis —

*Rosamund.* Hush!

*Margery.* — And I thought if it were the King's brother he had a better bride than the King, for the people do say that his is bad beyond all reckoning, and —

*Rosamund.* The people lie.

*Margery.* Very like, my lady, but most on 'em know an honest woman and a lady when they see her, and besides they say, she makes songs, and that's against her, for I never knew an honest woman that could make songs, tho' to be sure our mother 'ill sing me old songs by the hour, but then, God help her, she had 'em from her mother, and her mother from her mother back and back for ever so long, but none of 'em ever made songs, and they were all honest.

*Rosamund.* Go, you shall tell me of her some other time.

*Margery.* There's none so much to tell on her, my lady, only she kept the seventh commandment better than some I know on, or I couldn't look your ladyship i' the face, and she brew'd the best ale in all Glo'ster, that is to say in her time when she had the 'Crown.'

*Rosamund.* The crown! who?

*Margery.* Mother.

*Rosamund.* I mean her whom you call — fancy — my husband's brother's wife.

*Margery.* Oh, Queen Eleanor. Yes, my lady; and tho' I be sworn not to speak a word, I can tell you all about her, if —

*Rosamund.* No word now. I am faint and sleepy. Leave me. Nay — go. What! will you anger me?

[*Exit Margery.*]

He charged me not to question any of those About me. Have I? no! she question'd me.

Did she not slander *him*? Should she stay here?

May she not tempt me, being at my side, To question *her*? Nay, can I send her hence

Without his kindly leave? I am in the dark.

I have lived, poor bird, from cage to  
cage, and known  
Nothing but him — happy to know no  
more,  
So that he loved me — and he loves me  
— yes,  
And bound me by his love to secrecy  
Till his own time.

Eleanor, Eleanor, have I  
Not heard ill things of her in France?  
Oh, she's

The Queen of France. I see it — some  
confusion,  
Some strange mistake. I did not hear  
aright,  
Myself confused with parting from the  
King.

*Margery (behind scene).* Bee mustn't  
buzz,

Whoop — but he knows.

*Rosamund.* Yet her — what her? he  
hinted of some her —

When he was here before —  
Something that would displeas me.

Hath he stray'd

From love's clear path into the common  
bush,

And, being scratch'd, returns to his true  
rose,

Who hath not thorn enough to prick him  
for it,

Ev'n with a word?

*Margery (behind scene).* Bird mustn't  
tell,

Whoop — he can see.

*Rosamund.* I would not hear him.

Nay — there's more — he frown'd  
'No mate for her, if it should come to  
that' —

To that — to what?

*Margery (behind scene).* Whoop —  
but he knows,

Whoop — but he knows.

*Rosamund.* O God! some dreadful  
truth is breaking on me —

Some dreadful thing is coming on me.

[*Enter Geoffrey.*

Geoffrey!

*Geoffrey.* What are you crying for,  
when the sun shines?

*Rosamund.* Hath not thy father left  
us to ourselves?

*Geoffrey.* Ay, but he's taken the rain

with him. I hear Margery: I'll go play  
with her. [*Exit Geoffrey.*

*Rosamund.* Rainbow, stay,  
Gleam upon gloom,  
Bright as my dream,  
Rainbow, stay!  
But it passes away,  
Gloom upon gleam,  
Dark as my doom —  
O rainbow, stay.

SCENE II. — OUTSIDE THE WOODS  
NEAR ROSAMUND'S BOWER.

ELEANOR. FITZURSE.

*Eleanor.* Up from the salt lips of the  
land we two  
Have track'd the King to this dark inland  
wood;  
And somewhere hereabouts he vanish'd.  
Here

His turtle builds; his exit is our adit:  
Watch! he will out again, and presently,  
Seeing he must to Westminster and  
crown

Young Henry there to-morrow.

*Fitzurse.* We have watch'd  
So long in vain, he hath pass'd out again,  
And on the other side.

[*A great horn winded.*  
Hark! Madam!

*Eleanor.* Ay,  
How ghostly sounds that horn in the  
black wood!

[*A countryman flying.*  
Whither away, man? what are you flying  
from?

*Countryman.* The witch! the witch!  
she sits naked by a great heap of gold in  
the middle of the wood, and when the  
horn sounds she comes out as a wolf.  
Get you hence! a man passed in there  
to-day: I holla'd to him, but he didn't  
hear me: he'll never out again, the witch  
has got him. I daren't stay — I daren't  
stay!

*Eleanor.* Kind of the witch to give  
thee warning tho'. [*Man flies.*  
Is not this wood-witch of the rustic's fear  
Our woodland Circe that hath witch'd  
the King?

[*Horn sounded. Another flying.*

*Fitzurse.* Again! stay, fool, and tell me why thou fliest.

*Countryman.* Fly thou too. The King keeps his forest head of game here, and when that horn sounds, a score of wolf-dogs are let loose that will tear thee piecemeal. Linger not till the third horn. Fly! [Exit.]

*Eleanor.* This is the likelier tale. We have hit the place.

Now let the King's fine game look to itself. [Horn.]

*Fitzurse.* Again! —

And far on in the dark heart of the wood I hear the yelping of the hounds of hell.

*Eleanor.* I have my dagger here to still their throats.

*Fitzurse.* Nay, Madam, not to-night — the night is falling.

What can be done to-night?

*Eleanor.* Well — well — away.

SCENE III. — TRAITOR'S MEADOW AT FRÉTEVAL. PAVILIONS AND TENTS OF THE ENGLISH AND FRENCH BARONAGE.

BECKET and HERBERT OF BOSHAM.

*Becket.* See here!

What's here?

*Becket.* A notice from the priest, To whom our John of Salisbury committed

The secret of the bower, that our wolf-Queen

Is prowling round the fold. I should be back

In England ev'n for this.

*Herbert.* These are by-things

In the great cause.

*Becket.* The by-things of the Lord Are the wrong'd innocences that will cry From all the hidden by-ways of the world

In the great day against the wronger. I know

Thy meaning. Perish she, I, all, before The Church should suffer wrong!

*Herbert.* Do you see, my lord, There is the King talking with Walter Map?

*Becket.* He hath the Pope's last letters, and they threaten

The immediate thunder-blast of interdict: Yet he can scarce be touching upon those, Or scarce would smile that fashion.

*Herbert.* Winter sunshine! Beware of opening out thy bosom to it, Lest thou, myself, and all thy flock should catch

An after ague-fit of trembling. Look! He bows, he bares his head, he is coming hither.

Still with a smile.

Enter KING HENRY and WALTER MAP.

*Henry.* We have had so many hours together, Thomas, So many happy hours alone together, That I would speak with you once more alone.

*Becket.* My liege, your will and happiness are mine.

[Exit King and Becket.]

*Herbert.* The same smile still.

*Walter Map.* Do you see that great black cloud that hath come over the sun and cast us all into shadow?

*Herbert.* And feel it too.

*Walter Map.* And see you yon side-beam that is forced from under it, and sets the church-tower over there all a-hell-fire as it were?

*Herbert.* Ay.

*Walter Map.* It is this black, bell-silencing, anti-marrying, burial-hindering interdict that hath squeezed out this side-smile upon Canterbury, whereof may come conflagration. Were I Thomas, I wouldn't trust it. Sudden change is a house on sand; and tho' I count Henry honest enough, yet when fear creeps in at the front, honesty steals out at the back, and the King at last is fairly scared by this cloud — this interdict. I have been more for the King than the Church in this matter — yea, even for the sake of the Church: for, truly, as the case stood, you had safelier have slain an archbishop than a she-goat: but our recoverer and upholder of customs hath in this crowning of young Henry by York and London so violated the immemorial usage of the Church, that, like the gravedigger's child I have heard of, trying to ring the bell, he hath half-hanged himself in the rope

of the Church, or rather pulled all the Church with the Holy Father astride of it down upon his own head.

*Herbert.* Were you there?

*Walter Map.* In the church rope?—no. I was at the crowning, for I have pleasure in the pleasure of crowds, and to read the faces of men at a great show.

*Herbert.* And how did Roger of York comport himself?

*Walter Map.* As magnificently and archiepiscopally as our Thomas would have done: only there was a dare-devil in his eye—I should say a dare-Becket. He thought less of two kings than of one Roger the king of the occasion. Foliot is the holier man, perhaps the better. Once or twice there ran a twitch across his face as who should say what's to follow? but Salisbury was a calf cowed by Mother Church, and every now and then glancing about him like a thief at night when he hears a door open in the house and thinks 'the master.'

*Herbert.* And the father-king?

*Walter Map.* The father's eye was so tender it would have called a goose off the green, and once he strove to hide his face, like the Greek king when his daughter was sacrificed, but he thought better of it: it was but the sacrifice of a kingdom to his son, a smaller matter; but as to the young crowning himself, he looked so malapert in the eyes, that had I fathered him I had given him more of the rod than the sceptre. Then followed the thunder of the captains and the shouting, and so we came on to the banquet, from whence there puffed out such an incense of unctuousness into the nostrils of our Gods of Church and State, that Lucullus or Apicius might have sniffed it in their Hades of heathenism, so that the smell of their own roast had not come across it—

*Herbert.* Map, tho' you make your butt too big, you overshoot it.

*Walter Map.*—For as to the fish, they de-miracled the miraculous draught, and might have sunk a navy—

*Herbert.* There again, Goliating and Goliathising!

*Walter Map.*—And as for the flesh at table, a whole Peter's sheet, with all manner of game, and four-footed things, and fowls—

*Herbert.* And all manner of creeping things too?

*Walter Map.*—Well, there were Abbots—but they did not bring their women; and so we were dull enough at first, but in the end we flourished out into a merriment; for the old King would act servitor and hand a dish to his son; whereupon my Lord of York—his fine-cut face bowing and beaming with all that courtesy which hath less loyalty in it than the backward scrape of the clown's heel—'great honour,' says he, 'from the King's self to the King's son.' Did you hear the young King's quip?

*Herbert.* No, what was it?

*Walter Map.* Glancing at the days when his father was only Earl of Anjou, he answered:—'Should not an earl's son wait on a king's son?' And when the cold corners of the King's mouth began to thaw, there was a great motion of laughter among us, part real, part childlike, to be freed from the dulness—part royal, for King and kingling both laughed, and so we could not but laugh, as by a royal necessity—part childlike again—when we felt we had laughed too long and could not stay ourselves—many midriff-shaken even to tears, as springs gush out after earthquakes—but from those, as I said before, there may come a conflagration—tho', to keep the figure moist and make it hold water, I should say rather, the lachrymation of a lamentation; but look if Thomas have not flung himself at the King's feet. They have made it up again—for the moment.

*Herbert.* Thanks to the blessed Magdalen, whose day it is.

*Re-enter HENRY and BECKET.* (*During their conference the BARONS and BISHOPS of FRANCE and ENGLAND come in at back of stage.*)

*Becket.* Ay, King! for in thy kingdom, as thou knowest,

The spouse of the Great King, thy King,  
hath fallen —

The daughter of Zion lies beside the  
way —

The priests of Baal tread her under-  
foot —

The golden ornaments are stolen from  
her —

*Henry.* Have I not promised to re-  
store her, Thomas,

And send thee back again to Canter-  
bury?

*Becket.* Send back again those exiles  
of my kin

Who wander famine-wasted thro' the  
world.

*Henry.* Have I not promised, man,  
to send them back?

*Becket.* Yet one thing more. Thou  
hast broken thro' the pales

Of privilege, crowning thy young son by  
York,

London and Salisbury — not Canterbury.

*Henry.* York crown'd the Conqueror  
— not Canterbury.

*Becket.* There was no Canterbury in  
William's time.

*Henry.* But Hereford, you know,  
crown'd the first Henry.

*Becket.* But Anselm crown'd this  
Henry o'er again.

*Henry.* And thou shalt crown my  
Henry o'er again.

*Becket.* And is it then with thy good-  
will that I

Proceed against thine evil councillors,  
And hurl the dread ban of the Church  
on those

Who made the second mitre play the first,  
And acted me?

*Henry.* Well, well, then — have thy  
way!

It may be they were evil councillors.  
What more, my lord Archbishop? What  
more, Thomas?

I make thee full amends. Say all thy say,  
But blaze not out before the Frenchmen  
here.

*Becket.* More? Nothing, so thy  
promise be thy deed.

*Henry (holding out his hand).* Give  
me thy hand. My Lords of  
France and England,

My friend of Canterbury and myself  
Are now once more at perfect amity.

Unkingly should I be, and most un-  
knightly,

Not striving still, however much in vain,  
To rival him in Christian charity.

*Herbert.* All praise to Heaven, and  
sweet St. Magdalen!

*Henry.* And so farewell until we  
meet in England.

*Becket.* I fear, my liege, we may not  
meet in England.

*Henry.* How, do you make me a  
traitor?

*Becket.* No, indeed!  
That be far from thee.

*Henry.* Come, stay with us, then,  
Before you part for England.

*Becket.* I am bound  
For that one hour to stay with good

King Louis,  
Who help me when none else.

*Herbert.* He said thy life  
Was not one hour's worth in England

save  
King Henry gave thee first the kiss of  
peace.

*Henry.* He said so? Louis, did he?  
look you, Herbert,

When I was in mine anger with King  
Louis,

I swear I would not give the kiss of  
peace,

Not on French ground, nor any ground  
but English,

Where his cathedral stands. Mine old  
friend, Thomas,

I would there were that perfect trust  
between us,

That health of heart, once ours, ere  
Pope or King

Had come between us! Even now —  
who knows? —

I might deliver all things to thy hand —  
If . . . but I say no more . . . fare-  
well, my lord.

*Becket.* Farewell, my liege!

[*Exit Henry, then the Barons and  
Bishops.*

*Walter Map.* There again! when the  
full fruit of the royal promise might  
have dropt into thy mouth hadst thou  
but opened it to thank him.

*Becket.* He fenced his royal promise with an *if*.

*Walter Map.* And is the King's *if* too high a stile for your lordship to overstep and come at all things in the next field?

*Becket.* Ay, if this *if* be like the Devil's '*if*' Thou wilt fall down and worship me.'

*Herbert.* Oh, Thomas, I could fall down and worship thee, my Thomas, For thou hast trodden this wine-press alone.

*Becket.* Nay, of the people there are many with me.

*Walter Map.* I am not altogether with you, my lord, tho' I am none of those that would raise a storm between you, lest ye should draw together like two ships in a calm. You wrong the King: he meant what he said to-day. Who shall vouch for his to-morrows? One word further. Doth not the *fewness* of anything make the fulness of it in estimation? Is not virtue prized mainly for its rarity, and great baseness loathed as an exception? for were all, my lord, as noble as yourself, who would look up to you? and were all as base as—who shall I say—Fitzurse and his following—who would look down upon them? My lord, you have put so many of the King's household out of communion, that they begin to smile at it.

*Becket.* At their peril, at their peril—

*Walter Map.* —For tho' the drop may hollow out the dead stone, doth not the living skin thicken against perpetual whippings? This is the second grain of good counsel I ever proffered thee, and so cannot suffer by the rule of frequency. Have I sown it in salt? I trust not, for before God I promise you the King hath many more wolves than he can tame in his woods of England, and if it suit their purpose to howl for the King, and you still move against him, you may have no less than to die for it; but God and his free wind grant your lordship a happy home-return and the King's kiss of peace in Kent. Farewell! I must follow the King.

[*Exit.*]

*Herbert.* Ay, and I warrant the customs. Did the King Speak of the customs?

*Becket.* No!—To die for it—I live to die for it, I die to live for it.

The State will die, the Church can never die.

The King's not like to die for that which dies;

But I must die for that which never dies. It will be so—my visions in the Lord:

It must be so, my friend! the wolves of England

Must murder her one shepherd, that the sheep

May feed in peace. False figure, Map would say.

Earth's falses are heaven's truths. And when my voice

Is martyr'd mute, and this man disappears, That perfect trust may come again between us,

And there, there, there, not here I shall rejoice

To find my stray sheep back within the fold.

The crowd are scattering, let us move away!

And thence to England. [*Exeunt.*]

#### ACT IV.

##### SCENE I.—THE OUTSKIRTS OF THE BOWER.

*Geoffrey (coming out of the wood).* Light again! light again! Margery? no, that's a finer thing there. How it glitters!

*Eleanor (entering).* Come to me, little one. How camest thou hither?

*Geoffrey.* On my legs.

*Eleanor.* And mighty pretty legs too. Thou art the prettiest child I ever saw. Wilt thou love me?

*Geoffrey.* No; I only love mother.

*Eleanor.* Ay; and who is thy mother?

*Geoffrey.* They call her— But she lives secret, you see.

*Eleanor.* Why?

*Geoffrey.* Don't know why.

*Eleanor.* Ay, but some one comes to see her now and then. Who is he?

*Geoffrey.* Can't tell.



*Eleanor.* What does she call him?

*Geoffrey.* My liege.

*Eleanor.* Pretty one, how camest thou?

*Geoffrey.* There was a bit of yellow silk here and there, and it looked pretty like a glowworm, and I thought if I followed it I should find the fairies.

*Eleanor.* I am the fairy, pretty one, a good fairy to thy mother. Take me to her.

*Geoffrey.* There are good fairies and bad fairies, and sometimes she cries, and can't sleep sound o' nights because of the bad fairies.

*Eleanor.* She shall cry no more; she shall sleep sound enough if thou wilt take me to her. I am her good fairy.

*Geoffrey.* But you don't look like a good fairy. Mother does. You are not pretty, like mother.

*Eleanor.* We can't all of us be as pretty as thou art — (*aside*) little bastard. Come, here is a golden chain I will give thee if thou wilt lead me to thy mother.

*Geoffrey.* No — no gold. Mother says gold spoils all. Love is the only gold.

*Eleanor.* I love thy mother, my pretty boy. Show me where thou camest out of the wood.

*Geoffrey.* By this tree; but I don't know if I can find the way back again.

*Eleanor.* Where's the warder?

*Geoffrey.* Very bad. Somebody struck him.

*Eleanor.* Ay? who was that?

*Geoffrey.* Can't tell. But I heard say he had had a stroke, or you'd have heard his horn before now. Come along, then; we shall see the silk here and there, and I want my supper. [*Exeunt.*]

SCENE II. — ROSAMUND'S BOWER.

*Rosamund.* The boy so late; pray God, he be not lost.

I sent this Margery, and she comes not back;

I sent another, and she comes not back. I go myself — so many alleys, crossings, Paths, avenues — nay, if I lost him, now

The folds have fallen from the mystery, And left all naked, I were lost indeed.

*Enter GEOFFREY and ELEANOR.*

Geoffrey, the pain thou hast put me to! —  
[*Seeing Eleanor.*]  
Ha, you!

How came you hither?

*Eleanor.* Your own child brought me hither!

*Geoffrey.* You said you couldn't trust Margery, and I watched her and followed her into the woods, and I lost her and went on and on till I found the light and the lady, and she says she can make you sleep o' nights.

*Rosamund.* How dared you? Know you not this bower is secret, Of and belonging to the King of England, More sacred than his forests for the chase?

Nay, nay, Heaven help you; get you hence in haste  
Lest worse befall you.

*Eleanor.* Child, I am mine own self Of and belonging to the King. The King Hath divers ofs and ons, ofs and belongings, Almost as many as your true Mussulman — Belongings, paramours, whom it pleases him

To call his wives; but so it chances, child,

That I am his main paramour, his sultana. But since the fondest pair of doves will jar,

Ev'n in a cage of gold, we had words of late, And thereupon he call'd my children bastards.

Do you believe that you are married to him?

*Rosamund.* I should believe it.

*Eleanor.* You must not believe it, Because I have a wholesome medicine here

Puts that belief asleep. Your answer, beauty!

Do you believe that you are married to him?

*Rosamund.* Geoffrey, my boy, I saw the ball you lost in the fork of the great willow over the brook. Go. See that you do not fall in. Go.

*Geoffrey.* And leave you alone with the good fairy. She calls you beauty, but I don't like her looks. Well, you bid me go, and I'll have my ball anyhow. Shall I find you asleep when I come back?

*Rosamund.* Go. [*Exit Geoffrey.*]

*Eleanor.* He is easily found again.

*Do you believe it?*

I pray you then to take my sleeping-draught;

But if you should not care to take it—

See! [*Draws a dagger.*]

What! have I scared the red rose from your face

Into your heart? But this will find it there,

And dig it from the root for ever.

*Rosamund.* Help! help!

*Eleanor.* They say that walls have ears; but these, it seems,

Have none! and I have none—to pity thee.

*Rosamund.* I do beseech you—my child is so young,

So backward too; I cannot leave him yet.

I am not so happy I could not die myself,

But the child is so young. You have

children—his;

And mine is the King's child; so, if you love him—

Nay, if you love him, there is great wrong done

Somehow; but if you do not—there are those

Who say you do not love him—let me go

With my young boy, and I will hide my face,

Blacken and gipsyfy it; none shall know me;

The King shall never hear of me again,

But I will beg my bread along the world

With my young boy, and God will be our guide.

I never meant you harm in any way.

See, I can say no more.

*Eleanor.* Will you not say you are not married to him?

*Rosamund.* Ay, Madam, I can say it, if you will.

*Eleanor.* Then is thy pretty boy a bastard?

*Rosamund.* No.

*Eleanor.* And thou thyself a proven wanton?

*Rosamund.* No.  
I am none such. I never loved but one.

I have heard of such that range from love to love,

Like the wild beast—if you can call it love.

I have heard of such—yea, even among those

Who sit on thrones—I never saw any such,

Never knew any such, and howsoever

You do misname me, match'd with any such,

I am snow to mud.

*Eleanor.* The more the pity then  
That thy true home—the heavens—cry

out for thee  
Who art too pure for earth.

*Enter FITZURSE.*

*Fitzurse.* Give her to me.

*Eleanor.* The Judas-lover of our passion-play

Hath track'd us hither.

*Fitzurse.* Well, why not? I follow'd  
You and the child: he babbled all the way.

Give her to me to make my honey-moon.

*Eleanor.* Ay, as the bears love honey.  
Could you keep her

Indungeon'd from one whisper of the wind,

Dark even from a side glance of the moon,

And oublietted in the centre—No!  
I follow out my hate and thy revenge.

*Fitzurse.* You bade me take revenge  
another way—

To bring her to the dust. . . . Come  
with me, love,

And I will love thee. . . . Madam, let  
her live.

I have a far-off burrow where the King  
Would miss her and for ever.

*Eleanor.* How sayest thou,  
sweetheart?

Wilt thou go with him? he will marry  
thee.

*Rosamund.* Give me the poison; set  
me free of him!

[*Eleanor offers the vial.*]

No, no! I will not have it.

*Eleanor.* Then this other,  
The wiser choice, because my sleeping-  
draught

May bloat thy beauty out of shape, and  
make

Thy body loathsome even to thy child;  
While this but leaves thee with a broken  
heart;

A doll-face blanch'd and bloodless, over  
which

If pretty Geoffrey do not break his own,  
It must be broken for him.

*Rosamund.* O I see now  
Your purpose is to fright me — a trouba-  
dour

You play with words. You had never  
used so many,

Not if you meant it, I am sure. The  
child . . .

No . . . mercy! No! (*Kneels.*)

*Eleanor.* Play! . . . that  
bosom never

Heaved under the King's hand with such  
true passion

As at this loveless knife that stirs the riot  
Which it will quench in blood! Slave,  
if he love thee,

Thy life is worth the wrestle for it: arise,  
And dash thyself against me that I may  
slay thee!

The worm! shall I let her go? But  
ha! what's here?

By very God, the cross I gave the King!  
His village darling in some lewd caress  
Has wheedled it off the King's neck to  
her own.

By thy leave, beauty. Ay, the same!  
I warrant

Thou hast sworn on this my cross a  
hundred times

Never to leave him — and that merits  
death,

False oath on holy cross — for thou must  
leave him

To-day, but not quite yet. My good  
Fitzurse,

The running down the chase is kindlier  
sport

Ev'n than the death. Who knows but  
that thy lover

May plead so pitifully, that I may spare  
thee?

Come hither, man; stand there. (*To  
Rosamund.*) Take thy one chance;  
Catch at the last straw. Kneel to thy  
lord Fitzurse;

Crouch even because thou hatest him;  
fawn upon him

For thy life and thy son's.

*Rosamund (rising).* I am a Clifford,  
My son a Clifford and Plantagenet.

I am to die then, tho' there stand beside  
thee

One who might grapple with thy dagger,  
if he

Had aught of man, or thou of woman;  
or I

Would bow to such a baseness as would  
make me

Most worthy of it: both of us will die,  
And I will fly with my sweet boy to  
heaven,

And shriek to all the saints among the  
stars:

'Eleanor of Aquitaine, Eleanor of Eng-  
land!

Murder'd by that adulteress Eleanor,  
Whose doings are a horror to the east,  
A hissing in the west!' Have we not  
heard

Raymond of Poitou, thine own uncle —  
nay,

Geoffrey Plantagenet, thine own hus-  
band's father —

Nay, ev'n the accursed heathen Salad-  
deen —

Strike!

I challenge thee to meet me before God.  
Answer me there.

*Eleanor (raising the dagger).* This in  
thy bosom, fool,

And after in thy bastard's!

*Enter BECKET from behind. Catches  
hold of her arm.*

*Becket.* Murderess!

[*The dagger falls; they stare at one  
another. After a pause.*

*Eleanor.* My lord, we know you  
proud of your fine hand,

But having now admired it long enough,  
We find that it is mightier than it  
seems —

At least mine own is frailer: you are  
laming it.

*Becket.* And lamed and maim'd to  
dislocation, better  
Than raised to take a life which Henry  
bade me  
Guard from the stroke that dooms thee  
after death  
To wail in deathless flame.

*Eleanor.* Nor you, nor I  
Have now to learn, my lord, that our  
good Henry  
Says many a thing in sudden heats,  
which he  
Gainsays by next sunrising — often ready  
To tear himself for having said as much.  
My lord, Fitzurse —

*Becket.* He too! what dost thou here?  
Dares the bear slouch into the lion's den?  
One downward plunge of his paw would  
rend away  
Eyesight and manhood, life itself, from  
thee.

Go, lest I blast thee with anathema,  
And make thee a world's horror.

*Fitzurse.* My lord, I shall  
Remember this.

*Becket.* I do remember thee;  
Lest I remember thee to the lion, go.

[*Exit Fitzurse.*  
Take up your dagger; put it in the  
sheath.

*Eleanor.* Might not your courtesy  
stoop to hand it me?  
But crowns must bow when mitres sit so  
high.

Well — well — too costly to be left or lost.  
[*Picks up the dagger.*

I had it from an Arab soldan, who,  
When I was there in Antioch, marvell'd  
at

Our unfamiliar beauties of the west;  
But wonder'd more at my much constancy  
To the monk-king, Louis, our former  
burthen,

From whom, as being too kin, you know,  
my lord,  
God's grace and Holy Church deliver'd  
us.

I think, time given, I could have talk'd  
him out of

His ten wives into one. Look at the  
hilt.

What excellent workmanship. In our  
poor west

We cannot do it so well.

*Becket.* We can do worse.  
Madam, I saw your dagger at her throat;  
I heard your savage cry.

*Eleanor.* Well acted, was it?  
A comedy meant to seem a tragedy —  
A feint, a farce. My honest lord, you  
are known

Thro' all the courts of Christendom as  
one

That mars a cause with over-violence.  
You have wrong'd Fitzurse. I speak not  
of myself.

We thought to scare this minion of the  
King

Back from her churchless commerce with  
the King

To the fond arms of her first love,  
Fitzurse,

Who swore to marry her. You have  
spoil'd the farce.

My savage cry? Why, she — she — when  
I strove

To work against her license for her  
good,

Bark'd out at me such monstrous charges,  
that

The King himself, for love of his own  
sons,

If hearing, would have spurn'd her;  
whereupon

I menaced her with this, as when we  
threaten

A yelper with a stick. Nay, I deny not,  
That I was somewhat anger'd. Do you  
hear me?

Believe or no, I care not. You have  
lost

The ear of the King. I have it. . . .  
My lord Paramount,

Our great High-priest, will not your  
Holiness

Vouchsafe 'a gracious answer to your  
Queen?

*Becket.* Rosamund hath not answer'd  
you one word;

Madam, I will not answer you one word.  
Daughter, the world hath trick'd thee.

Leave it, daughter;

Come thou with me to Godstow nunnery,  
And live what may be left thee of a life

Saved as by miracle alone with Him  
Who gave it.

*Re-enter* GEOFFREY.

*Geoffrey.* Mother, you told me a great fib: it wasn't in the willow.

*Becket.* Follow us, my son, and we will find it for thee —  
Or something manlier.

[*Exeunt* Becket, Rosamund, and Geoffrey.]

*Eleanor.* The world hath trick'd her — that's the King; if so,  
There was the farce, the feint — not mine.

And yet

I am all but sure my dagger was a feint  
Till the worm turn'd — not life shot up  
in blood,

But death drawn in; — (*looking at the vial*) this was no feint then? no.

But can I swear to that, had she but given

Plain answer to plain query? nay, methinks

Had she but bow'd herself to meet the wave

Of humiliation, worshipt whom she loathed,

I should have let her be, scorn'd her too much

To harm her. Henry — Becket tells him this —

To take my life might lose him Aquitaine.  
Too politic for that. Imprison me?

No, for it came to nothing — only a feint.  
Did she not tell me I was playing on her?

I'll swear to mine own self it was a feint.

Why should I swear, Eleanor, who am, or was,

A sovereign power? The King plucks out their eyes

Who anger him, and shall not I, the Queen,

Tear out her heart — kill, kill with knife or venom

One of his slanderous harlots? 'None of such?'

I love her none the more. Tut, the chance gone,

She lives — but not for him; one point is gain'd.

O I, that thro' the Pope divorced King Louis,

Scorning his monkery, — I that wedded Henry,

Honouring his manhood, — will he not mock at me

The jealous fool balk'd of her will — with him?

But he and he must never meet again.

Reginald Fitzurse!

*Re-enter* FITZURSE.

*Fitzurse.* Here, Madam, at your pleasure.

*Eleanor.* My pleasure is to have a man about me.

Why did you slink away so like a cur?

*Fitzurse.* Madam, I am as much man as the King.

Madam, I fear Church-censures like your King.

*Eleanor.* He grovels to the Church when he's black-blooded,

But kinglike fought the proud archbishop, — kinglike

Defied the Pope, and, like his kingly sires, The Normans, striving still to break or bind

The spiritual giant with our island laws

And customs, made me for the moment proud

Ev'n of that stale Church-bond which link'd me with him

To bear him kingly sons. I am not so sure

But that I love him still. Thou as much man!

No more of that; we will to France and be  
Beforehand with the King, and brew frogn

out  
This Godstow-Becket intermeddling such

A strong hate-philtre as may madden him — madden

Against his priest beyond all hellebore.

## ACT V.

### SCENE I. — CASTLE IN NORMANDY. KING'S CHAMBER.

HENRY, ROGER OF YORK, FOLIOT,  
JOCELYN OF SALISBURY.

*Roger of York.* Nay, nay, my liege,  
He rides abroad with armed followers,  
Hath broken all his promises to thysel,

Cursed and anathematised us right and left,  
Stirr'd up a party there against your son—

*Henry.* Roger of York, you always hated him,  
Even when you both were boys at Theobald's.

*Roger of York.* I always hated boundless arrogance.  
In mine own cause I strove against him there,  
And in thy cause I strive against him now.

*Henry.* I cannot think he moves against my son,  
Knowing right well with what a tenderness  
He loved my son.

*Roger of York.* Before you made him king,  
But Becket ever moves against a king.  
The Church is all—the crime to be a king.

We trust your Royal Grace, lord of more land  
Than any crown in Europe, will not yield  
To lay your neck beneath your citizen's heel.

*Henry.* Not to a Gregory of my throning!  
No.

*Foliot.* My royal liege, in aiming at your love,

It may be sometimes I have overshot  
My duties to our Holy Mother Church,  
Tho' all the world allows I fall no inch  
Behind this Becket, rather go beyond  
In scourgings, macerations, mortifyings,  
Fasts, disciplines that clear the spiritual eye,

And break the soul from earth. Let all that be.

I boast not: but you know thro' all this quarrel

I still have cleaved to the crown, in hope the crown

Would cleave to me that but obey'd the crown,

Crowning your son; for which our loyal service,

And since we likewise swore to obey the customs,

York and myself, and our good Salisbury here,  
Are push'd from out communion of the Church.

*Jocelyn of Salisbury.* Becket hath trodden on us like worms, my liege;

Trodden one half dead; one half, but half-alive,  
Cries to the King.

*Henry (aside).* Take care o' thyself, O King.

*Jocelyn of Salisbury.* Being so crush'd and so humiliated

We scarcely dare to bless the food we eat  
Because of Becket.

*Henry.* What would ye have me do?

*Roger of York.* Summon your barons; take their counsel: yet

I know—their swear—as long as Becket breathes,

Your Grace will never have one quiet hour.

*Henry.* What? . . . Ay . . . but pray you do not work upon me.

I see your drift . . . it may be so . . . and yet

You know me easily anger'd. Will you hence?

He shall absolve you . . . you shall have redress.

I have a dizzying headache. Let me rest.

I'll call you by and by.

[*Exeunt* Roger of York, Foliot, and Jocelyn of Salisbury.]

Would he were dead! I have lost all love for him.

If God would take him in some sudden way—

Would he were dead. [*Lies down.*]

*Page (entering).* My liege, the Queen of England.

*Henry.* God's eyes! [*Starting up.*]

*Enter* ELEANOR.

*Eleanor.* Of England? Say of Aquitaine.

I am no Queen of England. I had dream'd

I was the bride of England, and a queen.

*Henry.* And,—while you dream'd you were the bride of England,—



Stirring her baby-king against me? ha!

*Eleanor.* The brideless Becket is thy king and mine:

I will go live and die in Aquitaine.

*Henry.* Except I clap thee into prison here,

Lest thou shouldst play the wanton there again.

Ha, you of Aquitaine! O you of Aquitaine!

You were but Aquitaine to Louis—no wife;

You are only Aquitaine to me—no wife.

*Eleanor.* And why, my lord, should I be wife to one

That only wedded me for Aquitaine?

Yet this no wife—her six and thirty sail

Of Provence blew you to your English throne;

And this no wife has borne you four brave sons,

And one of them at least is like to prove Bigger in our small world than thou art.

*Henry.* Ay—

Richard, if he be mine—I hope him mine.

But thou art like enough to make him thine.

*Eleanor.* Becket is like enough to make all his.

*Henry.* Methought I had recover'd of the Becket,

That all was planed and bevell'd smooth again,

Save from some hateful cantrip of thine own.

*Eleanor.* I will go live and die in Aquitaine.

I dream'd I was the consort of a king, Not one whose back his priest has broken.

*Henry.* What!

Is the end come? You, will you crown my foe

My victor in mid-battle? I will be Sole master of my house. The end is mine.

What game, what juggle, what devilry are you playing?

Why do you thrust this Becket on me again?

*Eleanor.* Why? for I am true wife, and have my fears

Lest Becket thrust you even from your throne.

Do you know this cross, my liege?

*Henry (turning his head).* Away! Not I.

*Eleanor.* Not ev'n the central diamond, worth, I think,

Half of the Antioch whence I had it?

*Henry.* That?

*Eleanor.* I gave it you, and you your paramour;

She sends it back, as being dead to earth,

So dead henceforth to you.

*Henry.* Dead! you have murder'd her,

Found out her secret bower and murder'd her!

*Eleanor.* Your Becket knew the secret of your bower.

*Henry (calling out).* Ho there! thy rest of life is hopeless prison.

*Eleanor.* And what would my own Aquitaine say to that?

First, free thy captive from her hopeless prison.

*Henry.* O devil, can I free her from the grave?

*Eleanor.* You are too tragic: both of us are players

In such a comedy as our court of Provence

Had laugh'd at. That's a delicate Latin lay

Of Walter Map: the lady holds the cleric

Lovelier than any soldier, his poor tonsure

A crown of Empire. Will you have it again?

(*Offering the cross. He dashes it down.*) St. Cupid, that is too irreverent.

Then mine once more. (*Puts it on.*)

Your cleric hath your lady.

Nay, what uncomely faces, could he see you!

Foam at the mouth because King Thomas, lord

Not only of your vassals but amours,

Thro' chastest honour of the Decalogue Hath used the full authority of his

Church

To put her into Godstow nunnery.

*Henry.* To put her into Godstow nunnery!  
He dared not — liar! yet, yet I remember —

I do remember.

He bade me put her into a nunnery —  
Into Godstow, into Hellstow, Devilstow!  
The Church! the Church!  
God's eyes! I would the Church were  
down in hell! [Exit.

*Eleanor.* Aha!

*Enter the four KNIGHTS.*

*Fitzurse.* What made the King cry  
out so furiously?

*Eleanor.* Our Becket, who will not  
absolve the Bishops.

I think ye four have cause to love this  
Becket.

*Fitzurse.* I hate him for his insolence  
to all.

*De Tracy.* And I for all his insolence  
to thee.

*De Brito.* I hate him for I hate him  
is my reason,  
And yet I hate him for a hypocrite.

*De Morville.* I do not love him, for  
he did his best  
To break the barons, and now braves the  
King.

*Eleanor.* Strike, then, at once, the  
King would have him — See!

*Re-enter HENRY.*

*Henry.* No man to love me, honour  
me, obey me!  
Sluggards and fools!

The slave that eat my bread has kick'd  
his King!

The dog I cramm'd with dainties worried  
me!

The fellow that on a lame jade came to  
court,

A ragged cloak for saddle — he, he, he,  
To shake my throne, to push into my  
chamber —

My bed, where ev'n the slave is private  
— he —

I'll have her out again, he shall absolve  
The bishops — they but did my will —  
not you —

Sluggards and fools, why do you stand  
and stare?

You are no King's men — you — you —  
you are Becket's men.

Down with King Henry! up with the  
Archbishop!

Will no man free me from this pestilent  
priest? [Exit.

[*The Knights draw their swords.*

*Eleanor.* Are ye king's men? I am  
king's woman, I.

*The Knights.* King's men! King's  
men!

SCENE II. — A ROOM IN CANTERBURY  
MONASTERY.

BECKET and JOHN OF SALISBURY.

*Becket.* York said so?

*John of Salisbury.* Yes: a man may  
take good counsel

Ev'n from his foe.

*Becket.* York will say anything.  
What is he saying now? gone to the  
King

And taken our anathema with him. York!  
Can the King de-anathematise this York?

*John of Salisbury.* Thomas, I would  
thou hadst return'd to England,  
Like some wise prince of this world from  
his wars,

With more of olive-branch and amnesty  
For foes at home — thou hast raised the  
world against thee.

*Becket.* Why, John, my kingdom is  
not of this world.

*John of Salisbury.* If it were more of  
this world it might be

More of the next. A policy of wise  
pardon

Wins here as well as there. To bless  
thine enemies —

*Becket.* Ay, mine, not Heaven's.

*John of Salisbury.* And may there  
not be something

Of this world's leaven in thee too, when  
crying

On Holy Church to thunder out her  
rights

And thine own wrong so pitilessly? Ah,  
Thomas,

The lightnings that we think are only  
Heaven's

Flash sometimes out of earth against the  
heavens.

The soldier, when he lets his whole self go  
 Lost in the common good, the common  
 wrong,  
 Strikes truest ev'n for his own self. I  
 crave  
 Thy pardon — I have still thy leave to  
 speak.  
 Thou hast waged God's war against the  
 King; and yet  
 We are self-uncertain creatures, and we  
 may,  
 Yea, even when we know not, mix our  
 spites  
 And private hates with our defence of  
 Heaven.

*Enter EDWARD GRIM.*

*Becket.* Thou art but yesterday from  
 Cambridge, Grim;  
 What say ye there of Becket?

*Grim.* I believe him  
 The bravest in our roll of Primates down  
 From Austin — there are some — for  
 there are men  
 Of canker'd judgment everywhere —

*Becket.* Who hold  
 With York, with York against me.

*Grim.* Well, my lord,  
 A stranger monk desires access to you.

*Becket.* York against Canterbury,  
 York against God!  
 I am open to him. [*Exit Grim.*]

*Enter ROSAMUND as a Monk.*

*Rosamund.* Can I speak with you  
 Alone, my father?

*Becket.* Come you to confess?  
*Rosamund.* Not now.

*Becket.* Then speak; this  
 is my other self,  
 Who like my conscience never lets me be.

*Rosamund (throwing back the cowl).* I  
 know him; our good John of  
 Salisbury.

*Becket.* Breaking already from thy  
 novice

To plunge into this bitter world again —  
 These wells of Marah. I am grieved,  
 my daughter.

I thought that I had made a peace for  
 thee.

*Rosamund.* Small peace was mine in  
 my novice, father.

Thro' all closed doors a dreadful whisper  
 crept

That thou wouldst excommunicate the  
 King.

I could not eat, sleep, pray: I had with me  
 The monk's disguise thou gavest me for  
 my bower:

I think our Abbess knew it and allow'd it.  
 I fled, and found thy name a charm to  
 get me

Food, roof, and rest. I met a robber  
 once,

I told him I was bound to see the Arch-  
 bishop;

'Pass on,' he said, and in thy name I  
 pass'd

From house to house. In one a son  
 stone-blind

Sat by his mother's hearth: he had gone  
 too far

Into the King's own woods; and the  
 poor mother,

Soon as she learnt I was a friend of  
 thine,

Cried out against the cruelty of the  
 King.

I said it was the King's courts, not the  
 King;

But she would not believe me, and she  
 wish'd

The Church were king: she had seen  
 the Archbishop once,

So mild, so kind. The people love thee,  
 father.

*Becket.* Alas! when I was Chan-  
 cellor to the King,

I fear I was as cruel as the King.

*Rosamund.* Cruel? Oh, no — it is  
 the law, not he;

The customs of the realm.

*Becket.* The customs! customs!

*Rosamund.* My lord, you have not  
 excommunicated him?

Oh, if you have, absolve him!

*Becket.* Daughter, daughter,  
 Deal not with things you know not.

*Rosamund.* I know him.  
 Then you have done it, and I call you  
 cruel.

*John of Salisbury.* No, daughter, you  
 mistake our good Archbishop;  
 For once in France the King had been  
 so harsh,

He thought to excommunicate him—  
Thomas,

You could not—old affection master'd  
you,

You falter'd into tears.

*Rosamund.* God bless him for it.

*Becket.* Nay, make me not a woman,  
John of Salisbury,

Nor make me traitor to my holy office.

Did not a man's voice ring along the  
aisle,

'The King is sick and almost unto  
death'?

How could I excommunicate him then?

*Rosamund.* And wilt thou excom-  
municate him now?

*Becket.* Daughter, my time is short,  
I shall not do it.

And were it longer—well—I should not  
do it.

*Rosamund.* Thanks in this life, and  
in the life to come.

*Becket.* Get thee back to thy nunnery  
with all haste;

Let this be thy last trespass. But one  
question—

How fares thy pretty boy, the little  
Geoffrey?

No fever, cough, croup, sickness?

*Rosamund.* No, but saved  
From all that by our solitude. The  
plagues

That smite the city spare the solitudes.

*Becket.* God save him from all sick-  
ness of the soul!

Thee too, thy solitude among thy nuns;  
May that save thee! Doth he remember  
me?

*Rosamund.* I warrant him.

*Becket.* He is marvellously like thee.

*Rosamund.* Likier the King.

*Becket.* No, daughter.

*Rosamund.* Ay, but wait  
Till his nose rises; he will be very  
king.

*Becket.* Ev'n so: but think not of  
the King: farewell!

*Rosamund.* My lord, the city is full  
of armed men.

*Becket.* Ev'n so: farewell!

*Rosamund.* I will but pass to vespers,  
And breathe one prayer for my liege-lord  
the King,

His child and mine own soul, and so  
return.

*Becket.* Pray for me too: much need  
of prayer have I.

[*Rosamund kneels and goes.*]

Dan John, how much we lose, we celi-  
bates,

Lacking the love of woman and of child!

*John of Salisbury.* More gain than  
loss; for of your wives you shall

Find one a slut whose fairest linen seems  
Foul as her dust-cloth, if she used it—  
one

So charged with tongue, that every thread  
of thought

Is broken ere it joins— a shrew to boot,  
Whose evil song far on into the night

Thrills to the topmost tile— no hope but  
death;

One slow, fat, white, a burthen of the  
hearth;

And one that being thwarted ever swoons  
And weeps herself into the place of  
power;

And one an *uxor pauperis Ibyci.*

So rare the household homemaking  
bee,

Man's help! but we, we have the blessed  
Virgin

For worship, and our Mother Church  
for bride;

And all the souls we saved and father'd  
here

Will greet us as our babes in Paradise.

What noise was that? she told us of  
arm'd men

Here in the city. Will you not with-  
draw?

*Becket.* I once was out with Henry  
in the days

When Henry loved me, and we came  
upon

A wild-fowl sitting on her nest, so still  
I reach'd my hand and touch'd; she did  
not stir;

The snow had frozen round her, and she  
sat

Stone-dead upon a heap of ice-cold  
eggs.

Look! how this love, this mother, runs  
thro' all

The world God made—even the beast  
—the bird!

*John of Salisbury.* Ay, still a lover of  
the beast and bird?  
But these arm'd men — will you not hide  
yourself?

Perchance the fierce De Brocs from Salt-  
wood Castle,

To assail our Holy Mother lest she  
brood

Too long o'er this hard egg, the world,  
and send

Her whole heart's heat into it, till it  
break

Into young angels. Pray you, hide  
yourself.

*Becket.* There was a little fair-hair'd  
Norman maid

Lived in my mother's house: if Rosa-  
mund is

The world's rose, as her name imports  
her — she

Was the world's lily.

*John of Salisbury.* Ay, and what of  
her?

*Becket.* She died of leprosy.

*John of Salisbury.* I know not why  
You call these old things back again, my  
lord.

*Becket.* The drowning man, they say,  
remembers all

The chances of his life, just ere he dies.

*John of Salisbury.* Ay — but these  
arm'd men — will you drown your-  
self?

He loses half the meed of martyrdom  
Who will be martyr when he might  
escape.

*Becket.* What day of the week?  
Tuesday?

*John of Salisbury.* Tuesday, my lord.

*Becket.* On a Tuesday was I born,  
and on a Tuesday

Baptized; and on a Tuesday did I fly  
Forth from Northampton; on a Tuesday  
pass'd

From England into bitter banishment;  
On a Tuesday at Pontigny came to  
me

The ghostly warning of my martyrdom;  
On a Tuesday from mine exile I return'd,  
And on a Tuesday —

[*Tracy enters, then Fitzurse, De  
Brito, and De Morville. Monks  
following.*

— on a Tuesday — Tracy!  
[*A long silence broken by Fitzurse say-  
ing, contemptuously*]

God help thee!

*John of Salisbury (aside).* How the  
good Archbishop reddens!

He never yet could brook the note of  
scorn.

*Fitzurse.* My lord, we bring a message  
from the King

Beyond the water; will you have it  
alone,

Or with these listeners near you?

*Becket.* As you will.

*Fitzurse.* Nay, as you will.

*Becket.* Nay, as you will.

*John of Salisbury.* Why then  
Better perhaps to speak with them apart.  
Let us withdraw.

[*All go out except the four Knights  
and Becket.*]

*Fitzurse.* We are all alone with him.  
Shall I not smite him with his own cross-  
staff?

*De Morville.* No, look! the door is  
open: let him be.

*Fitzurse.* The King condemns your  
excommunicating —

*Becket.* This is no secret, but a public  
matter.

In here again!

[*John of Salisbury and Monks return.*  
Now, sirs, the King's commands!

*Fitzurse.* The King beyond the water,  
thro' our voices,

Commands you to be dutiful and leal  
To your young King on this side of the  
water,

Not scorn him for the foibles of his youth.  
What! you would make his coronation  
void

By cursing those who crown'd him! Out  
upon you!

*Becket.* Reginald, all men know I  
loved the Prince.

His father gave him to my care, and I  
Became his second father: he had his  
faults,

For which I would have laid mine own  
life down

To help him from them, since indeed I  
loved him,

And love him next after my lord his father.

Rather than dim the splendour of his crown

I fain would treble and quadruple it  
With revenues, realms, and golden provinces

So that were done in equity.

*Fitzurse.* You have broken  
Your bond of peace, your treaty with the King—

Wakening such brawls and loud disturbances

In England, that he calls you oversea  
To answer for it in his Norman courts.

*Becket.* Prate not of bonds, for never,  
oh, never again

Shall the waste voice of the bond-breaking sea

Divide me from the mother church of England,

My Canterbury. Loud disturbances!

Oh, ay—the bells rang out even to deafening,

Organ and pipe, and dulcimer, chants and hymns

In all the churches, trumpets in the halls,  
Sobs, laughter, cries: they spread their raiment down

Before me—would have made my pathway flowers,

Save that it was mid-winter in the street,  
But full mid-summer in those honest hearts.

*Fitzurse.* The King commands you  
to absolve the bishops

Whom you have excommunicated.

*Becket.* I?

Not I, the Pope. Ask *him* for absolution.

*Fitzurse.* But you advised the Pope.

*Becket.* And so I did.

They have but to submit.

*The four Knights.* The King commands you.

We are all King's men.

*Becket.* King's men at least  
should know

That their own King closed with me last July

That I should pass the censures of the Church

On those that crown'd young Henry in this realm,

And trampled on the rights of Canterbury.

*Fitzurse.* What! dare you charge  
the King with treachery?

*He* sanction thee to excommunicate  
The prelates whom he chose to crown  
his son!

*Becket.* I spake no word of treachery,  
Reginald.

But for the truth of this I make appeal  
To all the archbishops, bishops, prelates,  
barons,

Monks, knights, five hundred, that were  
there and heard.

Nay, you yourself were there: you heard  
yourself.

*Fitzurse.* I was not there.

*Becket.* I saw you there.

*Fitzurse.* I was not.

*Becket.* You were. I never forget  
anything.

*Fitzurse.* He makes the King a  
traitor, me a liar.

How long shall we forbear him?

*John of Salisbury* (*drawing Becket  
aside*). O my good lord,

Speak with them privately on this here-  
after.

You see they have been revelling, and I  
fear

Are braced and brazen'd up with  
Christmas wines

For any murderous brawl.

*Becket.* And yet they prate  
Of mine, my brawls, when those, that

name themselves  
Of the King's part, have broken down

our barns,  
Wasted our diocese, outraged our tenants,

Lifted our produce, driven our clerics  
out—

Why they, your friends, those ruffians,  
the De Brocs,

They stood on Dover beach to murder  
me,

They slew my stags in mine own manor  
here,

Mutilated, poor brute, my sumpter-mule,  
Plunder'd the vessel full of Gascon wine,

The old King's present, carried off the  
casks,

Kill'd half the crew, dungeon'd the other  
half

In Pevensey Castle—

*De Morville.* Why not rather then,



If this be so, complain to your young King,

Not punish of your own authority?

*Becket.* Mine enemies barr'd all access to the boy.

They knew he loved me.

Hugh, Hugh, how proudly you exalt your head!

Nay, when they seek to overturn our rights,

I ask no leave of king, or mortal man, To set them straight again. Alone I do it.

Give to the King the things that are the King's,

And those of God to God.

*Fitzurse.* Threats! threats! ye hear him.

What! will he excommunicate all the world?

[*The Knights come round Becket.*

*De Tracy.* He shall not.

*De Brito.* Well, as yet — I should be grateful —

He hath not excommunicated me.

*Becket.* Because thou wast born excommunicate.

I never spied in thee one gleam of grace.

*De Brito.* Your Christian's Christian charity!

*Becket.* By St. Denis —

*De Brito.* Ay, by St. Denis, now will he flame out,

And lose his head as old St. Denis did.

*Becket.* Ye think to scare me from my loyalty

To God and to the Holy Father. No!

Tho' all the swords in England flash'd above me

Ready to fall at Henry's word or yours — Tho' all the loud-lung'd trumpets upon earth

Blared from the heights of all the thrones of her kings,

Blowing the world against me, I would stand

Clothed with the full authority of Rome, Mail'd in the perfect panoply of faith,

First of the foremost of their files, who die

For God, to people heaven in the great day

When God makes up his jewels. Once I fled —

Never again, and you — I marvel at you — Ye know what is between us. Ye have sworn

Yourselves my men when I was Chancellor —

My vassals — and yet threaten your Archbishop

In his own house.

*Knights.* Nothing can be between us That goes against our fealty to the King.

*Fitzurse.* And in his name we charge you that ye keep

This traitor from escaping.

*Becket.* Rest you easy, For I am easy to keep. I shall not fly.

Here, here, here will you find me.

*De Morville.* Know you not You have spoken to the peril of your life?

*Becket.* As I shall speak again.

*Fitzurse, De Tracy, and De Brito.* To arms!

[*They rush out, De Morville lingers.*

*Becket.* De Morville, I had thought so well of you; and even now

You seem the least assassin of the four. Oh, do not damn yourself for company!

Is it too late for me to save your soul? I pray you for one moment stay and speak.

*De Morville.* Becket, it is too late.

[*Exit.*

*Becket.* Is it too late? Too late on earth may be too soon in hell.

*Knights (in the distance).* Close the great gate — ho, there — upon the town.

*Becket's Retainers.* Shut the hall-doors.

[*A pause.*

*Becket.* You hear them, brother John; Why do you stand so silent, brother John?

*John of Salisbury.* For I was musing on an ancient saw,

*Suaviter in modo, fortiter in re,* Is strength less strong when hand-in-hand with grace?

*Gratior in pulchro corpore virtus.* Thomas,

Why should you heat yourself for such as these?

*Becket.* Methought I answer'd moderately enough.

*John of Salisbury.* As one that blows the coal to cool the fire.

My lord, I marvel why you never lean On any man's advising but your own.

*Becket.* Is it so, Dan John? well, what should I have done?

*John of Salisbury.* You should have taken counsel with your friends Before these bandits brake into your presence.

They seek — you make — occasion for your death.

*Becket.* My counsel is already taken, John.

I am prepared to die.

*John of Salisbury.* We are sinners all, The best of all not all-prepared to die.

*Becket.* God's will be done!

*John of Salisbury.* Ay, well. God's will be done!

*Grim (re-entering).* My lord, the knights are arming in the garden Beneath the sycamore.

*Becket.* Good! let them arm.

*Grim.* And one of the De Brocs is with them, Robert,

The apostate monk that was with Randolph here.

He knows the twists and turnings of the place.

*Becket.* No fear!

*Grim.* No fear, my lord.  
[Crashes on the hall-doors. The Monks flee.]

*Becket (rising).* Our dovecote flown! I cannot tell why monks should all be cowards.

*John of Salisbury.* Take refuge in your own cathedral, Thomas.

*Becket.* Do they not fight the Great Fiend day by day?

Valour and holy life should go together. Why should all monks be cowards?

*John of Salisbury.* Are they so?

I say, take refuge in your own cathedral.

*Becket.* Ay, but I told them I would wait them here.

*Grim.* May they not say you dared not show yourself

In your old place? and vespers are beginning.

[Bell rings for vespers till end of scene.]  
You should attend the office, give them heart.

They fear you slain: they dread they know not what.

*Becket.* Ay, monks, not men.

*Grim.* I am a monk, my lord.

Perhaps, my lord, you wrong us.

Some would stand by you to the death.

*Becket.* Your pardon.

*John of Salisbury.* He said, 'Attend the office.'

*Becket.* Attend the office?

Why then — The Cross! — who bears my Cross before me?

Methought they would have brain'd me with it, John. [Grim takes it.]

*Grim.* I! Would that I could bear thy cross indeed!

*Becket.* The Mitre!

*John of Salisbury.* Will you wear it? — there!

[Becket puts on the mitre.]

*Becket.* The Pall!

I go to meet my King!

[Puts on the pall.]

*Grim.* To meet the King!

[Crashes on the doors as they go out.]

*John of Salisbury.* Why do you move with such a stateliness?

Can you not hear them yonder like a storm,

Battering the doors, and breaking thro' the walls?

*Becket.* Why do the heathen rage?

My two good friends,

What matters murder'd here, or murder'd there?

And yet my dream foretold my martyrdom

In mine own church. It is God's will. Go on.

Nay, drag me not. We must not seem to fly.

SCENE III. — NORTH TRANSEPT OF CANTERBURY CATHEDRAL.

*On the right hand a flight of steps leading to the Choir, another flight on the left, leading to the North Aisle. Winter afternoon slowly darkening. Low*

*thunder now and then of an approaching storm.* MONKS heard chanting the service. ROSAMUND kneeling.

Rosamund. O blessed saint, O glorious Benedict,—

These arm'd men in the city, these fierce faces—

Thy holy follower founded Canterbury—  
Save that dear head which now is Canterbury,

Save him, he saved my life, he saved my child,

Save him, his blood would darken Henry's name;

Save him till all as saintly as thyself  
He miss the searching flame of purgatory,  
And pass at once perfect to Paradise.

[*Noise of steps and voices in the cloisters.*  
Hark! Is it they? Coming! He is not here—

Not yet, thank heaven. O save him!

[*Goes up steps leading to choir.*

Becket (*entering, forced along by John of Salisbury and Grim*). No, I tell you!

I cannot bear a hand upon my person,  
Why do you force me thus against my will?

Grim. My lord, we force you from your enemies.

Becket. As you would force a king from being crown'd.

John of Salisbury. We must not force the crown of martyrdom.

[*Service stops. Monks come down from the stairs that lead to the choir.*

Monks. Here is the great Archbishop!  
He lives! he lives!

Die with him, and be glorified together.

Becket. Together? . . . get you back! go on with the office.

Monks. Come, then, with us to vespers.

Becket. How can I come

When you so block the entry? Back, I say!

Go on with the office. Shall not Heaven be served

Tho' earth's last earthquake clash'd the minster-bells,

And the great deeps were broken up again,

And hiss'd against the sun?

[*Noise in the cloisters.*

Monks. The murderers, hark!

Let us hide! let us hide!

Becket. What do these people fear?

Monks. Those arm'd men in the cloister.

Becket. Be not such cravens!

I will go out and meet them.

Grim and others. Shut the doors!

We will not have him slain before our face.

[*They close the doors of the transept.*

*Knocking.*

Fly, fly, my lord, before they burst the doors!

[*Knocking.*

Becket. Why, these are our own monks who follow'd us!

And will you bolt them out, and have them slain?

Undo the doors: the church is not a castle:

Knock, and it shall be open'd. Are you deaf?

What, have I lost authority among you? Stand by, make way!

[*Opens the doors. Enter Monks from cloister.*

Come in, my friends, come in!

Nay, faster, faster!

Monks. Oh, my lord Archbishop,

A score of knights all arm'd with swords and axes—

To the choir, to the choir!

[*Monks divide, part flying by the stairs on the right, part by those on the left. The rush of these last bears Becket along with them some way up the steps, where he is left standing alone.*

Becket. Shall I too pass to the choir, And die upon the Patriarchal throne Of all my predecessors?

John of Salisbury. No, to the crypt! Twenty steps down. Stumble not in the darkness,

Lest they should seize thee.

Grim. To the crypt? no—no, To the chapel of St. Blaise beneath the roof!

John of Salisbury (*pointing upward and downward*). That way, or this! Save thyself either way.

*Becket.* Oh, no, not either way, nor  
any way  
Save by that way which leads thro' night  
to light.  
Not twenty steps, but one.  
And fear not I should stumble in the  
darkness,  
Not tho' it be their hour, the power of  
darkness,  
But my hour too, the power of light in  
darkness!

I am not in the darkness but the light,  
Seen by the Church in Heaven, the  
Church on earth —  
The power of life in death to make her  
free!

[*Enter the four Knights. John of  
Salisbury flies to the altar of St.  
Benedict.*

*Fitzurse.* Here, here, King's men!

[*Catches hold of the last flying Monk.*  
Where is the traitor Becket?

*Monk.* I am not he! I am not he,  
my lord.

I am not he indeed!

*Fitzurse.* Hence to the fiend!  
[*Pushes him away.*

Where is this treble traitor to the King?

*De Tracy.* Where is the Archbishop,  
Thomas Becket?

*Becket.* Here.

No traitor to the King, but Priest of  
God,  
Primate of England.

[*Descending into the transept.*  
I am he ye seek.

What would ye have of me?

*Fitzurse.* Your life.

*De Tracy.* Your life.

*De Morville.* Save that you will ab-  
solve the bishops.

*Becket.* Never, —

Except they make submission to the  
Church.

You had my answer to that cry before.

*De Morville.* Why, then you are a  
dead man; flee!

*Becket.* I will not.

I am readier to be slain, than thou to slay.  
Hugh, I know well thou hast but half a  
heart

To bathe this sacred pavement with my  
blood.

God pardon thee and these, but God's  
full curse  
Shatter you all to pieces if ye harm  
One of my flock!

*Fitzurse.* Was not the great gate  
shut?

They are thronging in to vespers — half  
the town.

We shall be overwhelm'd. Seize him  
and carry him!

Come with us — nay — thou art our pris-  
oner — come!

*De Morville.* Ay, make him prisoner,  
do not harm the man.

[*Fitzurse lays hold of the Arch-  
bishop's pall.*

*Becket.* Touch me not!

*De Brito.* How the good  
priest gods himself!

He is not yet ascended to the Father.

*Fitzurse.* I will not only touch, but  
drag thee hence.

*Becket.* Thou art my man, thou art  
my vassal. Away!

[*Flings him off till he reels, almost  
to falling.*

*De Tracy (lays hold of the pall).*  
Come; as he said, thou art our  
prisoner.

*Becket.* Down!

[*Throws him headlong.*

*Fitzurse (advances with drawn sword).*

I told thee that I should re-  
member thee!

*Becket.* Profligate pander!

*Fitzurse.* Do you hear that?  
strike, strike.

[*Strikes off the Archbishop's mitre,  
and wounds him in the forehead.*

*Becket (covers his eyes with his hand).*  
I do commend my cause to God, the

Virgin,  
St. Denis of France and St. Alphege of  
England,

And all the tutelar Saints of Canter-  
bury.

[*Grim wraps his arms about the  
Archbishop.*

Spare this defence, dear brother.

[*Tracy has arisen, and approaches,  
hesitatingly, with his sword  
raised.*

*Fitzurse.* Strike him, Tracy!

*Rosamund (rushing down steps from the choir).* No, No, No, No!

*Fitzurse.* This wanton here. De Morville,

Hold her away.

*De Morville.* I hold her.

*Rosamund (held back by De Morville, and stretching out her arms).*

Mercy, mercy,

As you would hope for mercy.

*Fitzurse.* Strike, I say.

*Grim.* O God, O noble knights, O sacrilege!

Strike our Archbishop in his own cathedral!

The Pope, the King, will curse you — the whole world

Abhor you; ye will die the death of dogs!

Nay, nay, good Tracy. [*Lifts his arm.*]

*Fitzurse.* Answer not, but strike.

*De Tracy.* There is my answer then.

[*Sword falls on Grim's arm, and glances from it, wounding Becket.*]

*Grim.* Mine arm is sever'd.

I can no more — fight out the good fight — die

Conqueror.

[*Stagger into the chapel of St. Benedict.*]

*Becket (falling on his knees).* At the right hand of Power —

Power and great glory — for thy Church, O Lord —

Into Thy hands, O Lord — into Thy hands! — [*Sinks prone.*]

*De Brito.* This last to rid thee of a world of brawls! [*Kills him.*]

The traitor's dead, and will arise no more.

*Fitzurse.* Nay, have we still'd him?

What! the great Archbishop!

Does he breathe? No?

*De Tracy.* No, Reginald, he is dead.

[*Storm bursts.*<sup>1</sup>]

*De Morville.* Will the earth gape and swallow us?

*De Brito.* The deed's done —

Away!

[*De Brito, De Tracy, Fitzurse, rush out, crying 'King's men!' De Morville follows slowly. Flashes of lightning thro' the Cathedral. Rosamund seen kneeling by the body of Becket.*]

<sup>1</sup> A tremendous thunderstorm actually broke over the Cathedral as the murderers were leaving it.

# THE CUP.

## A TRAGEDY.

### DRAMATIS PERSONÆ.

#### GALATIANS.

SYNORIX, *an ex-Tetrarch.*  
SINNATUS, *a Tetrarch.*  
Attendant.  
Boy.

*Maid.*

PHCEBE.

CAMMA, *wife of Sinnatus, afterwards  
Priestess in the Temple of Artemis.*

#### ROMANS.

ANTONIUS, *a Roman General.*  
PUBLIUS.

*Nobleman.*

*Messenger.*

#### ACT I.

##### SCENE I.—DISTANT VIEW OF A CITY OF GALATIA.

*As the curtain rises, Priestesses are heard  
singing in the Temple. Boy discovered  
on a pathway among Rocks, picking  
grapes. A party of Roman Soldiers,  
guarding a prisoner in chains, come  
down the pathway and exeunt.*

*Enter SYNORIX (looking round). Sing-  
ing ceases.*

*Synorix.* Pine, beech and plane, oak,  
walnut, apricot,

Vine, cypress, poplar, myrtle, bowering-in  
The city where she dwells. She past me  
here

Three years ago when I was flying from  
My tetrarchy to Rome. I almost touch'd  
her—

A maiden slowly moving on to music  
Among her maidens to this Temple—  
O Gods!

She is my fate—else wherefore has my  
fate

Brought me again to her own city?—  
married

Since—married Sinnatus, the Tetrarch  
here—

But if he be conspirator, Rome will  
chain,

Or slay him. I may trust to gain her  
then

When I shall have my tetrarchy restored

By Rome, our mistress, grateful that I  
show'd her

The weakness and the dissonance of our  
clans,

And how to crush them easily. Wretched  
race!

And once I wish'd to scourge them to the  
bones.

But in this narrow breathing-time of life  
Is vengeance for its own sake worth the  
while,

If once our ends are gain'd? and now  
this cup—

I never felt such passion for a woman.

*[Brings out a cup and scroll from  
under his cloak.]*

What have I written to her?

*[Reading the scroll.]*

'To the admired Camma, wife of  
Sinnatus, the Tetrarch, one who years  
ago, himself an adorer of our great god-  
dess, Artemis, beheld you afar off worship-  
ping in her Temple, and loved you for it,  
sends you this cup rescued from the burn-  
ing of one of her shrines in a city thro'  
which he past with the Roman army: it  
is the cup we use in our marriages.  
Receive it from one who cannot at pres-  
ent write himself other than

'A GALATIAN SERVING BY FORCE IN  
THE ROMAN LEGION.'

*[Turns and looks up to Boy.]*

Boy, dost thou know the house of  
Sinnatus?

*Boy.* These grapes are for the house  
of Sinnatus—



Close to the Temple.

*Synorix.* Yonder?

*Boy.* Yes.

*Synorix (aside).* That I  
With all my range of women should yet  
shun

To meet her face to face at once! My  
boy,

[*Boy comes down rocks to him.*]

Take thou this letter and this cup to  
Camma,

The wife of Sinnatus.

*Boy.* Going or gone to-day  
To hunt with Sinnatus.

*Synorix.* That matters not.  
Take thou this cup and leave it at her  
doors.

[*Gives the cup and scroll to the Boy.*]

*Boy.* I will, my lord.

[*Takes his basket of grapes and exit.*]

*Enter ANTONIUS.*

*Antonius (meeting the Boy as he goes  
out).* Why, whither runs the boy?  
Is that the cup you rescued from the fire?

*Synorix.* I send it to the wife of  
Sinnatus,

One half besotted in religious rites.

You come here with your soldiers to  
enforce

The long-withholden tribute: you suspect  
This Sinnatus of playing patriotism,  
Which in your sense is treason. You  
have yet

No proof against him: now this pious cup  
Is passport to their house, and open  
arms

To him who gave it; and once there I  
warrant

I worm thro' all their windings.

*Antonius.* If you prosper,  
Our Senate, wearied of their tetrarchies,  
Their quarrels with themselves, their  
spites at Rome,

Is like enough to cancel them, and throne  
One king above them all, who shall be  
true

To the Roman: and from what I heard  
in Rome,

This tributary crown may fall to you.

*Synorix.* The king, the crown! their  
talk in Rome? is it so?

[*Antonius nods.*]

Well—I shall serve Galatia taking it,  
And save her from herself, and be to  
Rome

More faithful than a Roman.

[*Turns and sees Camma coming.*]

Stand aside,

Stand aside; here she comes!

[*Watching Camma as she enters  
with her Maid.*]

*Camma (to Maid).* Where is he, girl?  
*Maid.* You know the waterfall

That in the summer keeps the mountain  
side,

But after rain o'erleaps a jutting rock  
And shoots three hundred feet.

*Camma.* The stag is there?  
*Maid.* Seen in the thicket at the  
bottom there

But yester-even.

*Camma.* Good then, we will climb  
The mountain opposite and watch the  
chase.

[*They descend the rocks and exeunt.*]

*Synorix (watching her).* (*Aside.*) The  
bust of Juno and the brows and  
eyes

Of Venus; face and form unmatched!

*Antonius.* Why do you look at her  
so lingeringly?

*Synorix.* To see if years have changed  
her.

*Antonius (sarcastically).* Love her, do  
you?

*Synorix.* I envied Sinnatus when he  
married her.

*Antonius.* She knows it? Ha!

*Synorix.* She—no, nor ev'n my face.

*Antonius.* Nor Sinnatus either?

*Synorix.* No, nor Sinnatus.

*Antonius.* Hot-blooded! I have  
heard them say in Rome,

That your own people cast you from their  
bounds,

For some unprincely violence to a woman,  
As Rome did Tarquin.

*Synorix.* Well, if this were so,  
I here return like Tarquin—for a crown.

*Antonius.* And may be foil'd like  
Tarquin, if you follow

Not the dry light of Rome's straight-going  
policy,

But the fool-fire of love or lust, which  
well

May make you lose yourself, may even  
drown you

In the good regard of Rome.

*Synorix.* Tut — fear me not;  
I ever had my victories among women.

I am most true to Rome.

*Antonius (aside).* I hate the man!  
What filthy tools our Senate works with!  
Still

I must obey them. (*Aloud.*) Fare you  
well. [*Going.*]

*Synorix.* Farewell!

*Antonius (stopping).* A moment! If  
you track this Sinnatus

In any treason, I give you here an  
order [*Produces a paper.*]

To seize upon him. Let me sign it.  
(*Signs it.*) There

'Antonius leader of the Roman Legion.'  
[*Hands the paper to Synorix. Goes  
up pathway and exit.*]

*Synorix.* Woman again! — but I am  
wiser now.

No rushing on the game — the net, — the  
net.

[*Shouts of 'Sinnatus! Sinnatus!'  
Then horn.*]

[*Looking off stage.*] He comes, a rough,  
bluff, simple-looking fellow.

If we may judge the kernel by the  
husk,

Not one to keep a woman's fealty when  
Assailed by Craft and Love. I'll join  
with him:

I may reap something from him — come  
upon *her*

Again, perhaps, to-day — *her*. Who are  
with him?

I see no face that knows me. Shall I  
risk it?

I am a Roman now, they dare not touch  
me.

I will.

*Enter SINNATUS, HUNTSMEN and hounds.*

Fair Sir, a happy day to you!

You reckon but little of the Roman here,  
While you can take your pastime in the  
woods.

*Sinnatus.* Ay, ay, why not? What  
would you with me, man?

*Synorix.* I am a life-long lover of the  
chase,

And tho' a stranger fain would be allow'd  
To join the hunt.

*Sinnatus.* Your name?

*Synorix.* Strato, my name.

*Sinnatus.* No Roman name?

*Synorix.* A Greek, my lord; you  
know

That we Galatians are both Greek and  
Gaul.

[*Shouts and horns in the distance.*]

*Sinnatus.* Hillo, the stag! (*To  
Synorix.*) What, you are all un-  
furnish'd?

Give him a bow and arrows — follow —  
follow.

[*Exit, followed by Huntsmen.*]

*Synorix.* Slowly but surely — till I  
see my way.

It is the one step in the dark beyond  
Our expectation, that amazes us.

[*Distant shouts and horns.*]

Hillo! Hillo!

[*Exit Synorix. Shouts and horns.*]

SCENE II. — A ROOM IN THE  
TETRARCH'S HOUSE.

*Frescoed figures on the walls. Evening.  
Moonlight outside. A couch with  
cushions on it. A small table with a  
flagon of wine, cups, plate of grapes,  
etc., also the cup of Scene I. A chair  
with drapery on it.*

*CAMMA enters, and opens curtains of  
window.*

*Camma.* No Sinnatus yet — and there  
the rising moon.

[*Takes up a cithern and sits on couch.  
Plays and sings.*]

Moon on the field and the foam,

Moon on the waste and the wold,

Moon bring him home, bring him home

Safe from the dark and the cold,

Home, sweet moon, bring him home,

Home with the flock to the fold —

Safe from the wolf —

(*Listening.*) Is he coming? I thought  
I heard

A footstep. No, not yet. They say that  
Rome

Sprang from a wolf. I fear my dear  
lord mixt

With some conspiracy against the wolf.  
This mountain shepherd never dream'd  
of Rome.

(Sings.) Safe from the wolf to the  
fold—

And that great break of precipice that  
runs

Thro' all the wood, where twenty years  
ago

Huntsman, and hound, and deer were all  
neck-broken!

Nay, here he comes.

*Enter SINNATUS followed by SYNORIX.*

*Sinnatus (angrily).* I tell thee, my  
good fellow,

*My arrow struck the stag.*

*Synorix.* But was it so?  
Nay, you were further off: besides the  
wind

Went with *my arrow.*

*Sinnatus.* I am sure *I struck him.*

*Synorix.* And I am just as sure, my  
lord, *I struck him.*

(*Aside.*) And I may strike your game  
when you are gone.

*Camma.* Come, come, we will not  
quarrel about the stag.

I have had a weary day in watching you.  
Yours must have been a wearier. Sit  
and eat,

And take a hunter's vengeance on the  
meats.

*Sinnatus.* No, no—we have eaten  
—we are heated. Wine!

*Camma.* Who is our guest?

*Sinnatus.* Strato he calls himself.

[*Camma offers wine to Synorix, while  
Sinnatus helps himself.*]

*Sinnatus.* I pledge you, Strato.

[*Drinks.*]

*Synorix.* And I you, my lord.

[*Drinks.*]

*Sinnatus (seeing the cup sent to Cam-  
ma).* What's here?

*Camma.* A strange gift sent to me  
to-day.

A sacred cup saved from a blazing  
shrine

Of our great Goddess, in some city where  
Antonius past. I had believed that

Rome

Made war upon the peoples not the Gods.

*Synorix.* Most like the city rose  
against Antonius,

Whereon he fired it, and the sacred  
shrine

By chance was burnt along with it.

*Sinnatus.* Had you then  
No message with the cup?

*Camma.* Why, yes, see here.  
[*Gives him the scroll.*]

*Sinnatus (reads).* 'To the admired  
*Camma*,—beheld you afar off—loved  
you—sends you this cup—the cup we  
use in our marriages—cannot at present  
write himself other than

'A GALATIAN SERVING BY FORCE IN  
THE ROMAN LEGION.'

Serving by force! Were there no boughs  
to hang on,

Rivers to drown in? Serve by force?  
No force

Could make me serve by force.

*Synorix.* How then, my lord?  
The Roman is encampt without your  
city—

The force of Rome a thousand-fold our  
own.

Must all Galatia hang or drown herself?  
And you a Prince and Tetrarch in this  
province—

*Sinnatus.* Province!

*Synorix.* Well, well, they  
call it so in Rome.

*Sinnatus (angrily).* Province!

*Synorix.* A noble anger! but An-  
tonius

To-morrow will demand your tribute—  
you,

Can you make war? Have you alliances?  
Bithynia, Pontus, Paphlagonia?

We have had our leagues of old with  
Eastern kings.

There is my hand—if such a league  
there be.

What will you do?

*Sinnatus.* Not set myself abroad  
And run my mind out to a random guest  
Who join'd me in the hunt. You saw  
my hounds

True to the scent; and we have two-  
legg'd dogs

Among us who can smell a true occasion,  
And when to bark and how.

*Synorix.* My good Lord *Sinnatus*

I once was at the hunting of a lion.  
 Roused by the clamour of the chase he  
 woke,  
 Came to the front of the wood — his  
 monarch mane  
 Bristled about his quick ears — he stood  
 there  
 Staring upon the hunter. A score of  
 dogs  
 Gnaw'd at his ankles: at the last he felt  
 The trouble of his feet, put forth one  
 paw,  
 Slew four, and knew it not, and so  
 remain'd  
 Staring upon the hunter: and this Rome  
 Will crush you if you wrestle with her;  
 then  
 Save for some slight report in her own  
 Senate  
 Scarce know what she has done.  
*(Aside.)* Would I could move him,  
 Provoke him any way! *(Aloud.)* The  
 Lady Camma,  
 Wise I am sure as she is beautiful,  
 Will close with me that to submit at  
 once  
 Is better than a wholly-hopeless war,  
 Our gallant citizens murder'd all in vain,  
 Son, husband, brother gash'd to death in  
 vain,  
 And the small state more cruelly trampled  
 on  
 Than had she never moved.  
*Camma.* Sir, I had once  
 A boy who died a babe; but were he  
 living  
 And grown to man and Sinnatus will'd  
 it, I  
 Would set him in the front rank of the  
 fight  
 With scarce a pang. *(Rises.)* Sir, if a  
 state submit  
 At once, she may be blotted out at once  
 And swallow'd in the conqueror's chron-  
 icle.  
 Whereas in wars of freedom and defence  
 The glory and grief of battle won or lost  
 Solders a race together — yea — tho' they  
 fail,  
 The names of those who fought and fell  
 are like  
 A bank'd-up fire that flashes out again  
 From century to century, and at last

May lead them on to victory — I hope  
 so —  
 Like phantoms of the Gods.  
*Sinnatus.* Well spoken, wife.  
*Synorix (bowing).* Madam, so well I  
 yield.  
*Sinnatus.* I should not wonder  
 If Synorix, who has dwelt three years in  
 Rome  
 And wrought his worst against his native  
 land,  
 Returns with this Antonius.  
*Synorix.* What is Synorix?  
*Sinnatus.* Galatian, and not know?  
 This Synorix  
 Was Tetrarch here, and tyrant also — did  
 Dishonour to our wives.  
*Synorix.* Perhaps you judge him  
 With feeble charity: being as you tell  
 me  
 Tetrarch, there might be willing wives  
 enough  
 To feel dishonour, honour.  
*Camma.* Do not say so.  
 I know of no such wives in all Galatia.  
 There may be courtesans for aught I  
 know  
 Whose life is one dishonour.

*Enter ATTENDANT.*

*Attendant (aside).* My lord, the men!

*Sinnatus (aside).* Our anti-Roman  
 faction?

*Attendant (aside).* Ay, my lord.

*Synorix (overhearing).* *(Aside.)* I  
 have enough — their anti-Roman  
 faction.

*Sinnatus (aloud).* Some friends of  
 mine would speak with me with-  
 out.

You, Strato, make good cheer till I re-  
 turn. *[Exit.]*

*Synorix.* I have much to say, no  
 time to say it in.

First, lady, know myself am that Galatian  
 Who sent the cup.

*Camma.* I thank you from my heart.

*Synorix.* Then that I serve with  
 Rome to serve Galatia.

That is my secret: keep it, or you sell  
 me

To torment and to death. *[Coming closer.]*  
 For your ear only —



*Enter SINNATUS and ATTENDANT.*

*Sinnatus.* Thou art that Synorix!  
One whom thou hast wrong'd  
Without there, knew thee with Antonius.  
They howl for thee, to rend thee head  
from limb.

*Synorix.* I am much malign'd. I  
thought to serve Galatia.

*Sinnatus.* Serve thyself first, villain!  
They shall not harm  
My guest within my house. There!  
(*points to door*) there! this door  
Opens upon the forest! Out, begone!  
Henceforth I am thy mortal enemy.

*Synorix.* However I thank thee  
(*draws his sword*); thou hast  
saved my life. [*Exit.*]

*Sinnatus.* (*To Attendant.*) Return  
and tell them Synorix is not here.  
[*Exit Attendant.*]

What did that villain Synorix say to you?

*Camma.* Is he—that—Synorix?

*Sinnatus.* Wherefore should you  
doubt it?

One of the men there knew him.

*Camma.* Only one,  
And he perhaps mistaken in the face.

*Sinnatus.* Come, come, could he  
deny it? What did he say?

*Camma.* What *should* he say?

*Sinnatus.* What *should* he say, my  
wife!

He should say this, that being Tetrarch  
once

His own true people cast him from their  
doors

Like a base coin.

*Camma.* Not kindly to them?

*Sinnatus.* Kindly?  
O the most kindly Prince in all the  
world!

Would clap his honest citizens on the  
back,

Bandy their own rude jests with them,  
be curious

About the welfare of their babes, their  
wives,

O ay—their wives—their wives. What  
should he say?

He should say nothing to my wife if I  
Were by to throttle him! He steep'd  
himself

In all the lust of Rome. How should  
*you* guess

What maner of beast it is?

*Camma.* Yet he seem'd kindly,  
And said he loathed the cruelties that  
Rome

Wrought on her vassals.

*Sinnatus.* Did he, *honest* man?

*Camma.* And you, that seldom brook  
the stranger here,  
Have let him hunt the stag with you to-  
day.

*Sinnatus.* I warrant you now, he said  
*he* struck the stag.

*Camma.* Why no, he never touch'd  
upon the stag.

*Sinnatus.* Why so I said, *my* arrow.  
Well, to sleep.

[*Goes to close door.*]  
*Camma.* Nay, close not yet the door  
upon a night

That looks half day.

*Sinnatus.* True; and my friends may  
spy him

And slay him as he runs.

*Camma.* He is gone already.  
Oh look,—yon grove upon the moun-  
tain,—white

In the sweet moon as with a lovelier  
snow!

But what a blotch of blackness under-  
neath!

Sinnatus, you remember—yea, you must,  
That there three years ago—the vast  
vine-bowers

Ran to the summit of the trees, and  
dropt

Their streamers earthward, which a  
breeze of May

Took ever and anon, and open'd out  
The purple zone of hill and heaven;  
there

You told your love; and like the sway-  
ing vines—

Yea,—with our eyes,—our hearts, our  
prophet hopes

Let in the happy distance, and that all  
But cloudless heaven which we have  
found together

In our three married years! You kiss'd  
me there

For the first time. Sinnatus, kiss me  
now.



*Sinnatus.* First kiss. (*Kisses her.*)

There then. You talk almost as if it

Might be the last.

*Camma.* Will you not eat a little?

*Sinnatus.* No, no, we found a goat-herd's hut and shared

His fruits and milk. Liar! You will believe

Now that he never struck the stag—a brave one

Which you shall see to-morrow.

*Camma.* I rise to-morrow

In the gray dawn, and take this holy cup To lodge it in the shrine of Artemis.

*Sinnatus.* Good!

*Camma.* If I be not back in half an hour,

Come after me.

*Sinnatus.* What! is there danger?

*Camma.* Nay, None that I know: 'tis but a step from here

To the Temple.

*Sinnatus.* All my brain is full of sleep.

Wake me before you go, I'll after you—

After me now! [*Closes door and exit.*]

*Camma* (*drawing curtains*). Your shadow. *Synorix*—

His face was not malignant, and he said That men malign'd him. Shall I go?

Shall I go?

Death, torture—

'He never yet flung back a woman's prayer'—

I go, but I will have my dagger with me. [*Exit.*]

SCENE III.—SAME AS SCENE I.

DAWN.

*Music and Singing in the Temple.*

*Enter SYNORIX watchfully, after him PUBLIUS and SOLDIERS.*

*Synorix.* Publius!

*Publius.* Here!

*Synorix.* Do you remember what I told you?

*Publius.* When you cry 'Rome, Rome,' to seize

On whomsoever may be talking with you,

Or man, or woman, as traitors unto Rome.

*Synorix.* Right. Back again. How many of you are there?

*Publius.* Some half a score.

[*Execute Soldiers and Publius.*]

*Synorix.* I have my guard about me.

I need not fear the crowd that hunted me

Across the woods, last night. I hardly gain'd

The camp at midnight. Will she come to me

Now that she knows me *Synorix*? Not if *Sinnatus*

Has told her all the truth about me. Well,

I cannot help the mould that I was cast in.

I fling all that upon my fate, my star.

I know that I am genial, I would be

Happy, and make all others happy so

They did not thwart me. Nay, she will not come.

Yet if she be a true and loving wife

She may, perchance, to save this husband. Ay!

See, see, my white bird stepping toward the snare.

Why now I count it all but miracle,

That this brave heart of mine should shake me so,

As helplessly as some unbearded boy's

When first he meets his maiden in a bower.

[*Enter Camma* (*with cup*).]

The lark first takes the sunlight on his wing,

But you, twin sister of the morning star,

Forelead the sun.

*Camma.* Where is *Antonius*?

*Synorix.* Not here as yet. You are too early for him.

[*She crosses towards Temple.*]

*Synorix.* Nay, whither go you now?

*Camma.* To lodge this cup

Within the holy shrine of *Artemis*,

And so return.

*Synorix.* To find *Antonius* here.

[*She goes into the Temple, he looks after her.*]

The loveliest life that ever drew the light  
From heaven to brood upon her, and  
enrich  
Earth with her shadow! I trust she *will*  
return.

These Romans dare not violate the  
Temple.

No, I must lure my game into the camp.  
A woman I could live and die for.

What!

Die for a woman, what new faith is this?  
I am not mad, not sick, not old enough  
To dote on one alone. Yes, mad for  
her,

Camma the stately, Camma the great-  
hearted,

So mad, I fear some strange and evil  
chance

Coming upon me, for by the Gods I  
seem

Strange to myself.

*Re-enter* CAMMA.

*Camma.* Where is Antonius?

*Synorix.* Where? As I said before,  
you are still too early.

*Camma.* Too early to be here alone  
with thee;

For whether men malign thy name, or  
no,

It bears an evil savour among women.

Where is Antonius? (*Loud.*)

*Synorix.* Madam, as you know  
The camp is half a league without the  
city;

If you will walk with me we needs must  
meet

Antonius coming, or at least shall find  
him

There in the camp.

*Camma.* No, not one step with thee.  
Where is Antonius? (*Louder.*)

*Synorix* (*advancing towards her*).  
Then for your own sake,

Lady, I say it with all gentleness,  
And for the sake of Sinnatus your  
husband,

I must compel you.

*Camma* (*drawing her dagger*). Stay!  
— too near is death.

*Synorix* (*disarming her*). Is it not  
easy to disarm a woman?

*Enter* SINNATUS (*seizes him from behind  
by the throat*).

*Synorix* (*throttled and scarce audible*).  
Rome! Rome!

*Sinnatus.* Adulterous dog!

*Synorix* (*stabbing him with Camma's  
dagger*). What! will you have it?

[*Camma utters a cry and  
runs to Sinnatus.*]

*Sinnatus* (*falls backward*). I have  
it in my heart — to the Temple —  
fly —

For my sake — or they seize on thee.  
Remember!

Away — farewell! [*Dies.*]

*Camma* (*runs up the steps into the  
Temple, looking back*). Farewell!

*Synorix* (*seeing her escape*). The  
women of the Temple drag her in.

Publius! Publius! No,  
Antonius would not suffer me to break  
Into the sanctuary. She hath escaped.

[*Looking down at Sinnatus.*  
'Adulterous dog!' that red-faced rage at  
me!

Then with one quick short stab — eternal  
peace.

So end all passions. Then what use in  
passions?

To warm the cold bounds of our dying life  
And, lest we freeze in mortal apathy,

Employ us, heat us, quicken us, help us,  
keep us

From seeing all too near that urn, those  
ashes

Which all must be. Well used, they  
serve us well.

I heard a saying in Egypt, that ambition  
Is like the sea wave, which the more you  
drink,

The more you thirst — yea — drink too  
much, as men

Have done on rafts of wreck — it drives  
you mad.

I will be no such wreck, am no such  
gamester

As, having won the stake, would dare  
the chance

Of double, or losing all. The Roman  
Senate,

For I have always play'd into their hands,

Means me the crown. And Camma for my bride —

The people love her — if I win her love, They too will cleave to me, as one with her.

There then I rest, Rome's tributary king.  
[*Looking down on Sinnatus.*]

Why did I strike him? — having proof enough

Against the man, I surely should have left

That stroke to Rome. He saved my life too. Did he?

It seem'd so. I have play'd the sudden fool.

And that sets her against me — for the moment.

Camma — well, well, I never found the woman

I could not force, or wheedle to my will.

She will be glad at last to wear my crown.

And I will make Galatia prosperous too, And we will chirp among our vines, and smile

At bygone things till that (*pointing to Sinnatus*) eternal peace.

Rome! Rome!

[*Enter Publius and Soldiers.*]

Twice I cried 'Rome.' Why came ye not before?

*Publius.* Why come we now? Whom shall we seize upon?

*Synorix* (*pointing to the body of Sinnatus*). The body of that dead traitor Sinnatus.

Bear him away.

*Music and Singing in Temple.*

## ACT II.

SCENE.—INTERIOR OF THE TEMPLE OF ARTEMIS.

*Small gold gates on platform in front of the veil before the colossal statue of the Goddess, and in the centre of the Temple a tripod altar, on which is a lighted lamp. Lamps (lighted) suspended between each pillar. Tripods, vases,*

*garlands of flowers, etc., about stage. Altar at back close to Goddess, with two cups. Solemn music. Priestesses decorating the Temple.*

(*The Chorus of PRIESTESSES sing as they enter.*)

Artemis, Artemis, hear us, O Mother, hear us, and bless us!

Artemis, thou that art life to the wind, to the wave, to the glebe, to the fire!

Hear thy people who praise thee! O help us from all that oppress us!

Hear thy priestesses hymn thy glory! O yield them all their desire!

*Priestess.* Phœbe, that man from Synorix, who has been

So oft to see the Priestess, waits once more Before the Temple.

*Phæbe.* We will let her know.

[*Signs to one of the Priestesses, who goes out.*]

Since Camma fled from Synorix to our Temple,

And for her beauty, stateliness, and power Was chosen Priestess here, have you not mark'd

Her eyes were ever on the marble floor? To-day they are fixt and bright—they look straight out.

Hath she made up her mind to marry him?

*Priestess.* To marry him who stabb'd her Sinnatus!

You will not easily make me credit that.

*Phæbe.* Ask her.

*Enter CAMMA as Priestess (in front of the curtains).*

*Priestess.* You will not marry Synorix?

*Camma.* My girl, I am the bride of Death, and only

Marry the dead.

*Priestess.* Not Synorix then?

*Camma.* My girl,

At times this oracle of great Artemis Has no more power than other oracles To speak directly.

*Phæbe.* Will you speak to him, The messenger from Synorix who waits Before the Temple?

*Camma.* Why not? Let him enter.

[*Comes forward on to step by tripod*

*Enter a MESSENGER.*

*Messenger (kneels).* Greeting and health from Synorix! More than once

You have refused his hand. When last I saw you, You all but yielded. He entreats you now For your last answer. When he struck at Sinnatus —

As I have many a time declared to you — He knew not at the moment who had fasten'd

About his throat — he begs you to forget it

As scarce his act: — a random stroke: all else

Was love for you: he prays you to believe him.

*Camma.* I pray him to believe — that I believe him.

*Messenger.* Why that is well. You mean to marry him?

*Camma.* I mean to marry him — if that be well.

*Messenger.* This very day the Romans crown him king

For all his faithful services to Rome. He wills you then this day to marry him, And so be throned together in the sight Of all the people, that the world may know

You twain are reconciled, and no more feuds

Disturb our peaceful vassalage to Rome.

*Camma.* To-day? Too sudden. I will brood upon it.

When do they crown him?

*Messenger.* Even now.

*Camma.* And where?

*Messenger.* Here by your temple.

*Camma.* Come once more to me Before the crowning, — I will answer you. [*Exit Messenger.*

*Phæbe.* Great Artemis! O Camma, can it be well, Or good, or wise, that you should clasp a hand

Red with the sacred blood of Sinnatus?

*Camma.* Good! mine own dagger driven by Synorix found All good in the true heart of Sinnatus,

And quench'd it there for ever. Wise! Life yields to death and wisdom bows to Fate,

Is wisest, doing so. Did not this man Speak well? We cannot fight imperial Rome,

But he and I are both Galatian-born, And tributary sovereigns, he and I Might teach this Rome — from knowledge of our people —

Where to lay on her tribute — heavily here

And lightly there. Might I not live for that,

And drown all poor self-passion in the sense

Of public good?

*Phæbe.* I am sure you will not marry him.

*Camma.* Are you so sure? I pray you wait and see.

[*Shouts (from the distance),*  
'Synorix! Synorix!'

*Camma.* Synorix, Synorix! So they cried Sinnatus

Not so long since — they sicken me. The One

Who shifts his policy suffers something, must

Accuse himself, excuse himself; the Many

Will feel no shame to give themselves the lie.

*Phæbe.* Most like it was the Roman soldiers shouted.

*Camma.* Their shield-borne patriot of the morning star

Hang'd at mid-day, their traitor of the dawn

The clamour'd darling of their afternoon! And that same head they would have play'd at ball with

And kick'd it featureless — they now would crown.

[*Flourish of trumpets.*

*Enter a Galatian NOBLEMAN with crown on a cushion.*

*Noble (kneels).* Greeting and health from Synorix. He sends you This diadem of the first Galatian Queen, That you may feed your fancy on the glory of it,

And join your life this day with his, and wear it  
Beside him on his throne. He waits your answer.

*Camma.* Tell him there is one shadow among the shadows,  
One ghost of all the ghosts — as yet so new,  
So strange among them — such an alien there,

So much of husband in it still — that if  
The shout of Synorix and Camma sitting  
Upon one throne, should reach it, it would rise

*He!* . . . HE, with that red star between the ribs,

And my knife there — and blast the king and me,

And blanch the crowd with horror. I dare not, sir!

Throne him — and then the marriage — ay and tell him

That I accept the diadem of Galatia —

[*All are amazed.*]

Yea, that ye saw me crown myself withal. [*Puts on the crown.*]

I wait him his crown'd queen.

*Noble.* So will I tell him. [*Exit.*]

*Music.* Two Priestesses go up the steps before the shrine, draw the curtains on either side (discovering the Goddess), then open the gates and remain on steps, one on either side, and kneel. A Priestess goes off and returns with a veil of marriage, then assists Phæbe to veil Camma. At the same time Priestesses enter and stand on either side of the Temple. Camma and all the Priestesses kneel, raise their hands to the Goddess, and bow down.

[*Shouts, 'Synorix! Synorix!'* All rise.

*Camma.* Fling wide the doors and let the new-made children  
Of our imperial mother see the show.

[*Sunlight pours through the doors.*]

I have no heart to do it. (*To Phæbe.*)  
Look for me!

[*Crouches.* Phæbe looks out.

[*Shouts, 'Synorix! Synorix!'*]

*Phæbe.* He climbs the throne. Hot blood, ambition, pride

So bloat and redden his face — O would it were

His third last apoplexy! O bestial!

O how unlike our goodly Sinnatus.

*Camma* (*on the ground*). You wrong him surely; far as the face goes

A goodlier-looking man than Sinnatus.

*Phæbe* (*aside*). How dare she say it?

I could hate her for it

But that she is distracted.

[*A flourish of trumpets.*]

*Camma.* Is he crown'd?

*Phæbe.* Ay, there they crown him.

[*Crowd without shout, 'Synorix! Synorix!'*]

[*A Priestess brings a box of spices to Camma, who throws them on the altar-flame.*]

*Camma.* Rouse the dead altar-flame, fling in the spices,

Nard, Cinnamon, amomum, benzoin.

Let all the air reel into a mist of odour,

As in the midmost heart of Paradise.

Lay down the Lydian carpets for the king.

The king should pace on purple to his bride,

And music there to greet my lord the king. [*Music.*]

(*To Phæbe*). Dost thou remember when I wedded Sinnatus?

Ay, thou wast there — whether from maiden fears

Or reverential love for him I loved,

Or some strange second-sight, the marriage cup

Wherefrom we make libation to the Goddess

So shook within my hand, that the red wine

Ran down the marble and lookt like blood, like blood.

*Phæbe.* I do remember your first-marriage fears.

*Camma.* I have no fears at this my second marriage.

See here — I stretch my hand out — hold it there.

How steady it is!

*Phæbe.* Steady enough to stab him!

*Camma.* O hush! O peace! This violence ill becomes

The silence of our Temple. Gentleness,  
Low words best chime with this solemnity.

*Enter a procession of Priestesses and Children bearing garlands and golden goblets, and strewing flowers.*

*Enter SYNORIX (as King, with gold laurel-wreath crown and purple robes), followed by ANTONIUS, PUBLIUS, Noblemen, Guards, and the Populace.*

*Camma.* Hail, King!

*Synorix.* Hail, Queen!

The wheel of Fate has roll'd me to the top.

I would that happiness were gold, that I  
Might cast my largess of it to the crowd!  
I would that every man made feast to-day  
Beneath the shadow of our pines and  
planes!

For all my truer life begins to-day.

The past is like a travell'd land now sunk  
Below the horizon — like a barren shore  
That grew salt weeds, but now all  
drown'd in love

And glittering at full tide — the bounteous  
bays

And havens filling with a blissful sea.

Nor speak I now too mightily, being  
King

And happy! happiest, Lady, in my  
power

To make you happy.

*Camma.* Yes, sir.

*Synorix.* Our Antonius,

Our faithful friend of Rome, tho' Rome  
may set

A free foot where she will, yet of his  
courtesy

Entreats he may be present at our  
marriage.

*Camma.* Let him come — a legion  
with him, if he will.

(*To Antonius.*) Welcome, my lord Antonius,  
to our Temple.

(*To Synorix.*) You on this side the altar.  
(*To Antonius.*) You on that.

Call first upon the Goddess, Synorix.

[*All face the Goddess. Priestesses, Children, Populace, and Guards kneel — the others remain standing.*

*Synorix.* O Thou, that dost inspire  
the germ with life,  
The child, a thread within the house of  
birth,

And give him limbs, then air, and send  
him forth

The glory of his father — Thou whose  
breath

Is balmy wind to robe our hills with  
grass,

And kindle all our vales with myrtle-  
blossom,

And roll the golden oceans of our grain,  
And sway the long grape-bunches of our  
vines,

And fill all hearts with fatness and the lust  
Of plenty — make me happy in my  
marriage!

*Chorus (chanting).* Artemis, Artemis,  
hear him, Ionian Artemis!

*Camma.* O Thou that slayest the  
babe within the womb

Or in the being born, or after slayest him  
As boy or man, great Goddess, whose  
storm-voice

Unsockets the strong oak, and rears his  
root

Beyond his head, and strows our fruits,  
and lays

Our golden grain, and runs to sea and  
makes it

Foam over all the fledged wealth of kings  
And peoples, hear.

Whose arrow is the plague — whose quick  
flash splits

The mid-sea mast, and rifts the tower to  
the rock,

And hurls the victor's column down with  
him

That crowns it, hear.  
Who causes the safe earth to shudder  
and gape,

And gulf and flatten in her closing chasm  
Domed cities, hear.

Whose lava-torrents blast and blacken a  
province

To a cinder, hear.  
Whose winter-cataracts find a realm and  
leave it

A waste of rock and ruin, hear. I call  
thee

To make my marriage prosper to my  
wish!



*Chorus.* Artemis, Artemis, hear her,  
Ephesian Artemis!

*Camma.* Artemis, Artemis, hear me,  
Galatian Artemis!

I call on our own Goddess in our own  
Temple.

*Chorus.* Artemis, Artemis, hear her,  
Galatian Artemis!

[*Thunder. All rise.*

*Synorix (aside).* Thunder! Ay, ay,  
the storm was drawing hither

Across the hills when I was being  
crown'd.

I wonder if I look as pale as she?

*Camma.* Art thou—still bent—on  
marrying?

*Synorix.* Surely—yet

These are strange words to speak to  
Artemis.

*Camma.* Words are not always what  
they seem, my King.

I will be faithful to thee till thou die.

*Synorix.* I thank thee, Camma,—I  
thank thee.

*Camma (turning to Antonius).* An-  
tonius,

Much graced are we that our Queen  
Rome in you

Deigns to look in upon our barbarisms.

[*Turns, goes up steps to altar before  
the Goddess. Takes a cup from  
off the altar. Holds it towards  
Antonius. Antonius goes up to  
the foot of the steps opposite to  
Synorix.*

You see this cup, my lord.

[*Gives it to him.*

*Antonius.* Most curious!

The many-breasted mother Artemis

Emboss'd upon it.

*Camma.* It is old, I know not  
How many hundred years. Give it me  
again.

It is the cup belonging our own Temple.

[*Puts it back on altar, and takes up  
the cup of Act I. Showing it to  
Antonius.*

Here is another sacred to the Goddess,  
The gift of Synorix; and the Goddess,  
being

For this most grateful, wills, thro' me  
her Priestess,

In honour of his gift and of our marriage,

That Synorix should drink from his own  
cup.

*Synorix.* I thank thee, Camma,—I  
thank thee.

*Camma.* For—my lord—

It is our ancient custom in Galatia  
That ere two souls be knit for life and  
death,

They two should drink together from one  
cup,

In symbol of their married unity,  
Making libation to the Goddess. Bring  
me

The costly wines we use in marriages.

[*They bring in a large jar of wine.*

*Camma pours wine into cup.*

(*To Synorix.*) See here, I fill it. (*To  
Antonius.*) Will you drink, my  
lord?

*Antonius.* I? Why should I? I  
am not to be married.

*Camma.* But that might bring a  
Roman blessing on us.

*Antonius (refusing cup).* Thy pardon,  
Priestess!

*Camma.* Thou art in the right.

This blessing is for Synorix and for me.

See first I make libation to the Goddess.

[*Makes libation.*

And now I drink.

[*Drinks and fills the cup again.*

Thy turn, Galatian King.

Drink and drink deep—our marriage will  
be fruitful.

Drink and drink deep, and thou wilt  
make me happy.

[*Synorix goes up to her. She hands  
him the cup. He drinks.*

*Synorix.* There, Camma! I have  
almost drain'd the cup—

A few drops left.

*Camma.* Libation to the Goddess.

[*He throws the remaining drops on  
the altar and gives Camma the cup.*

*Camma (placing the cup on the altar).*  
Why then the Goddess hears.

[*Comes down and forward to tripod.  
Antonius follows.*

*Antonius,*

Where wast thou on that morning when  
I came

To plead to thee for Sinnatus's life,  
Beside this temple half a year ago?

*Antonius.* I never heard of this request of thine.

*Synorix* (*coming forward hastily to foot of tripod steps*). I sought him and I could not find him. Pray you,

Go on with the marriage rites.

*Camma.* Antonius —  
'Camma!' who spake?

*Antonius.* Not I.

*Phæbe.* Nor any here.

*Camma.* I am all but sure that some one spake. Antonius,  
If you had found him plotting against Rome,

Would you have tortured Sinnatus to death?

*Antonius.* No thought was mine of torture or of death,

But had I found him plotting, I had counsell'd him

To rest from vain resistance. Rome is fated

To rule the world. Then, if he had not listen'd;

I might have sent him prisoner to Rome.

*Synorix.* Why do you palter with the ceremony?

Go on with the marriage rites.

*Camma.* They are finish'd.

*Synorix.* How!

*Camma.* Thou hast drunk deep

enough to make me happy.

Dost thou not feel the love I bear to thee  
Glow thro' thy veins?

*Synorix.* The love I bear to thee  
Glow thro' my veins since first I look'd  
on thee.

But wherefore slur the perfect ceremony?  
The sovereign of Galatia weds his Queen.

Let all be done to the fullest in the sight  
Of all the Gods.

Nay, rather than so clip

The flowery robe of Hymen, we would  
add

Some golden fringe of gorgeousness  
beyond

Old use, to make the day memorial,  
when

Synorix, first King, Camma, first Queen  
o' the Realm,

Drew here the richest lot from Fate, to  
live

And die together.

This pain — what is it? — again?  
I had a touch of this last year — in —  
Rome.

Yes, yes. (*To Antonius.*) Your arm —  
a moment — it will pass.

I reel beneath the weight of utter joy —  
This all too happy day, crown — queen  
at once. [*Staggers.*]

O all ye Gods — Jupiter! — Jupiter!  
[*Falls backward.*]

*Camma.* Dost thou cry out upon the  
Gods of Rome?

Thou art Galatian-born. Our Artemis  
Has vanquish'd their Diana.

*Synorix* (*on the ground*). I am  
poison'd.

She — close the Temple door. Let her  
not fly.

*Camma* (*leaning on tripod*). Have I  
not drunk of the same cup with  
thee?

*Synorix.* Ay, by the Gods of Rome  
and all the world,

She too — she too — the bride! the  
Queen! and I —

Monstrous! I that loved her.

*Camma.* I loved *him*.  
*Synorix.* O murderous mad-woman!

I pray you lift me  
And make me walk awhile. I have  
heard these poisons

May be walk'd down.  
[*Antonius and Publius raise him up.*]

My feet are tons of lead,  
They will break in the earth — I am  
sinking — hold me —

Let me alone.  
[*They leave him; he sinks down on  
ground.*]

Too late — thought myself wise —  
A woman's dupe. Antonius, tell the  
Senate

I have been most true to Rome — would  
have been true

To her — if — if — [*Falls as if dead.*]

*Camma* (*coming and leaning over him*).  
So falls the throne of an hour.

*Synorix* (*half rising*). Throne? is it  
thou? the Fates are throned,  
not we —

Not guilty of ourselves — thy doom and  
mine —

Thou — coming my way too — Camma —  
good-night. [Dies.

*Camma* (*upheld by weeping Priestesses*). Thy way? poor worm,  
crawl down thine own black hole  
To the lowest Hell. Antonius, is *he*  
there?

I meant thee to have follow'd — better  
thus.

Nay, if my people must be thralls of  
Rome,

He is gentle, tho' a Roman.

[*Sinks back into the arms of the Priestesses.*

*Antonius.* Thou art one  
With thine own people, and though a  
Roman I

Forgive thee, Camma.

*Camma* (*raising herself*). 'CAMMA!'  
— why there again

I am most sure that some one call'd. O  
women,

Ye will have Roman masters. I am  
glad

I shall not see it. Did not some old  
Greek

Say death was the chief good? He had  
my fate for it,

Poison'd. (*Sinks back again.*) Have I  
the crown on? I will go

To meet him, crown'd! crown'd victor  
of my will —

On my last voyage — but the wind has  
fail'd —

Growing dark too — but light enough to  
row.

Row to the blessed Isles! the blessed  
Isles! —

Sinnatus!

Why comes he not to meet me? It is  
the crown

Offends him — and my hands are too  
sleepy

To lift it off. [*Phœbe takes the crown off.*  
Who touch'd me then? I thank you.

[*Rises, with outspread arms.*  
There — league on league of ever-shining  
shore

Beneath an ever-rising sun — I see him —  
'Camma, Camma!' Sinnatus, Sinnatus!

[Dies.

# THE FALCON.

DRAMATIS PERSONÆ.

THE COUNT FEDERIGO DEGLI ALBERIGHI.

FILIPPO, *Count's foster-brother.*

THE LADY GIOVANNA.

ELISABETTA, *the Count's nurse.*

SCENE. — AN ITALIAN COTTAGE.  
CASTLE AND MOUNTAINS SEEN  
THROUGH WINDOW.

ELISABETTA *discovered seated on stool in window, darning. The Count with Falcon on his hand comes down through the door at back. A withered wreath on the wall.*

*Elisabetta.* So, my lord, the Lady Giovanna, who hath been away so long, came back last night with her son to the castle.

*Count.* Hear that, my bird! Art thou not jealous of her?  
My princess of the cloud, my plumed purveyor,  
My far-eyed queen of the winds — thou that canst soar  
Beyond the morning lark, and howsoever  
Thy quarry wind and wheel, swoop down upon him  
Eagle-like, lightning-like — strike, make his feathers  
Glance in mid heaven.

[*Crosses to chair.*

I would thou hadst a mate!  
Thy breed will die with thee, and mine with me:

I am as lone and loveless as thyself.

[*Sits in chair.*

Giovanna here! Ay, ruffle thyself — be jealous!  
Thou should'st be jealous of her. Tho' I bred thee  
The full-train'd marvel of all falconry,  
And love thee and thou me, yet if Giovanna  
Be here again — No, no! Buss me, my bird!  
The stately widow has no heart for me.  
Thou art the last friend left me upon earth —

No, no again to that. [*Rises and turns.*

My good old nurse,  
I had forgotten thou wast sitting there.

*Elisabetta.* Ay, and forgotten thy foster-brother too.

*Count.* Bird-babble for my falcon!  
Let it pass.

What art thou doing there?

*Elisabetta.* Darning, your lordship.  
We cannot flaunt it in new feathers now:

Nay, if we will buy diamond necklaces  
To please our lady, we must darn, my lord.

This old thing here (*points to necklace round her neck*),  
they are but blue beads — my Piero,  
God rest his honest soul, he bought 'em for me,

Ay, but he knew I meant to marry him.  
How couldst thou do it, my son? How couldst thou do it?

*Count.* She saw it at a dance, upon a neck  
Less lovely than her own, and long'd for it.

*Elisabetta.* She told thee as much?

*Count.* No, no — a friend of hers.

*Elisabetta.* Shame on her that she took it at thy hands,  
She rich enough to have bought it for herself!

*Count.* She would have robb'd me then of a great pleasure.

*Elisabetta.* But hath she yet return'd thy love?

*Count.* Not yet!

*Elisabetta.* She should return thy necklace then.

*Count.* Ay, if  
She knew the giver; but I bound the seller  
To silence, and I left it privily

At Florence, in her palace.

*Elisabetta.* And sold thine own  
To buy it for her. She not know? She  
knows

There's none such other —

*Count.* Madman anywhere.  
Speak freely, tho' to call a madman  
mad

Will hardly help to make him sane again.

*Enter FILIPPO.*

*Filippo.* Ah, the women, the women!  
Ah, Monna Giovanna, you here again!  
you that have the face of an angel and  
the heart of a — that's too positive! You  
that have a score of lovers and have not  
a heart for any of them — that's positive-  
negative: you that have *not* the head of  
a toad, and *not* a heart like the jewel in  
it — that's too negative; you that have a  
cheek like a peach and a heart like the  
stone in it — that's positive again — that's  
better!

*Elisabetta.* Sh — sh — Filippo!

*Filippo* (*turns half round*). Here has  
our master been a-glorifying and a-velvet-  
ing and a-silking himself, and a-peacock-  
ing and a-spreading to catch her eye for  
a dozen year, till he hasn't an eye left in  
his own tail to flourish among the pea-  
hens, and all along o' you, Monna Gio-  
vanna, all along o' you!

*Elisabetta.* Sh — sh — Filippo! Can't  
you hear that you are saying behind his  
back what you see you are saying afore  
his face?

*Count.* Let him — he never spares  
me to my face!

*Filippo.* No, my lord, I never spare  
your lordship to your lordship's face, nor  
behind your lordship's back, nor to right,  
nor to left, nor to round about and back  
to your lordship's face again, for I'm  
honest, your lordship.

*Count.* Come, come, Filippo, what  
is there in the larder?

[*Elisabetta crosses to fireplace and  
puts on wood.*

*Filippo.* Shelves and hooks, shelves  
and hooks, and when I see the shelves I  
am like to hang myself on the hooks.

*Count.* No bread?

*Filippo.* Half a breakfast for a rat!

*Count.* Milk?

*Filippo.* Three laps for a cat!

*Count.* Cheese?

*Filippo.* A supper for twelve mites.

*Count.* Eggs?

*Filippo.* One, but addled.

*Count.* No bird?

*Filippo.* Half a tit and a hern's bill.

*Count.* Let be thy jokes and thy  
jerks, man! Anything or nothing?

*Filippo.* Well, my lord, if all-but-  
nothing be anything, and one plate of  
dried prunes be all-but-nothing, then  
there is anything in your lordship's larder  
at your lordship's service, if your lord-  
ship care to call for it.

*Count.* Good mother, happy was the  
prodigal son,

For he return'd to the rich father; I  
But add my poverty to thine. And all  
Thro' following of my fancy. Pray thee  
make

Thy slender meal out of those scraps and  
shreds

Filippo spoke of. As for him and me,  
There sprouts a salad in the garden still.  
(*To the Falcon.*) Why didst thou miss  
thy quarry yester-even?

To-day, my beauty, thou must dash us  
down

Our dinner from the skies. Away,  
Filippo!

[*Exit, followed by Filippo.*

*Elisabetta.* I knew it would come to  
this. She has beggared him. I always  
knew it would come to this! (*Goes up  
to table as if to resume darning, and  
looks out of window.*) Why, as I live,  
there is Monna Giovanna coming down  
the hill from the castle. Stops and  
stares at our cottage. Ay, ay! stare at  
it: it's all you have left us. Shame  
on you! *She* beautiful: sleek as a  
miller's mouse! Meal enough, meat  
enough, well fed; but beautiful — bah!  
Nay, see, why she turns down the path  
through our little vineyard, and I sneezed  
three times this morning. Coming to  
visit my lord, for the first time in her  
life too! Why, bless the saints! I'll  
be bound to confess her love to him at  
last. I forgive her, I forgive her! I  
knew it would come to this — I always

knew it must come to this! (*Goes up to door during latter part of speech and opens it.*) Come in, Madonna, come in. (*Retires to front of table and curtsies as the Lady Giovanna enters, then moves chair towards the hearth.*) Nay, let me place this chair for your ladyship.

[*Lady Giovanna moves slowly down stage, then crosses to chair, looking about her, bows as she sees the Madonna over fireplace, then sits in chair.*

*Lady Giovanna.* Can I speak with the Count?

*Elisabetta.* Ay, my lady, but won't you speak with the old woman first, and tell her all about it and make her happy? for I've been on my knees every day for these half-dozen years in hope that the saints would send us this blessed morning; and he always took you so kindly, he always took the world so kindly. When he was a little one, and I put the bitters on my breast to wean him, he made a wry mouth at it, but he took it so kindly, and your ladyship has given him bitters enough in this world, and he never made a wry mouth at you, he always took you so kindly—which is more than I did, my lady, more than I did—and he so handsome—and bless your sweet face, you look as beautiful this morning as the very Madonna her own self—and better late than never—but come when they will—then or now—it's all for the best, come when they will—they are made by the blessed saints—these marriages.

[*Raises her hands.*

*Lady Giovanna.* Marriages? I shall never marry again!

*Elisabetta (rises and turns).* Shame on her then!

*Lady Giovanna.* Where is the Count?

*Elisabetta.* Just gone  
To fly his falcon.

*Lady Giovanna.* Call him back and say

I come to breakfast with him.

*Elisabetta.* Holy mother!

To breakfast! Oh, sweet saints! one plate of prunes!

Well, Madam, I will give your message to him.

[*Exit.*

*Lady Giovanna.* His falcon, and I come to ask for his falcon,  
The pleasure of his eyes—boast of his hand—

Pride of his heart—the solace of his hours—

His one companion here—nay, I have heard

That, thro' his late magnificence of living

And this last costly gift to mine own self,  
[*Shows diamond necklace.*

He hath become so beggar'd, that his falcon

Ev'n wins his dinner for him in the field.

That must be talk, not truth, but truth or talk,

How can I ask for his falcon?

[*Rises and moves as she speaks.*

O my sick boy!

My daily fading Florio, it is thou

Hath set me this hard task, for when I say

What can I do—what can I get for thee?

He answers, 'Get the Count to give me his falcon,

And that will make me well.' Yet if I ask,

He loves me, and he knows I know he loves me!

Will he not pray me to return his love—

To marry him?—(*pause*)—I can never marry him.

His grandsire struck my grandsire in a brawl

At Florence, and my grandsire stabb'd him there.

The feud between our houses is the bar I cannot cross; I dare not brave my brother,

Break with my kin. My brother hates him, scorns

The noblest-natured man alive, and I—Who have that reverence for him that I scarce

Dare beg him to receive his diamonds back—

How can I, dare I, ask him for his falcon?

[*Puts diamonds in her casket.*



Re-enter COUNT and FILIPPO. COUNT  
turns to FILIPPO.

Count. Do what I said; I cannot do  
it myself.

Filippo. Why then, my lord, we are  
pauper'd out and out.

Count. Do what I said!  
[Advances and bows low.

Welcome to this poor cottage, my dear  
lady.

Lady Giovanna. And welcome turns  
a cottage to a palace.

Count. 'Tis long since we have met!

Lady Giovanna. To make amends  
I come this day to break my fast with you.

Count. I am much honour'd — yes —  
[Turns to Filippo.

Do what I told thee. Must I do it  
myself?

Filippo. I will, I will. (Sighs.) Poor  
fellow! [Exit.

Count. Lady, you bring your light  
into my cottage

Who never deign'd to shine into my  
palace.

My palace wanting you was but a cot-  
tage;

My cottage, while you grace it, is a  
palace.

Lady Giovanna. In cottage or in  
palace, being still

Beyond your fortunes, you are still the  
king

Of courtesy and liberality.

Count. I trust I still maintain my  
courtesy;

My liberality perforce is dead  
Thro' lack of means of giving.

Lady Giovanna. Yet I come  
To ask a gift.

[Moves toward him a little.

Count. It will be hard, I fear,  
To find one shock upon the field when all  
The harvest has been carried.

Lady Giovanna. But my boy —  
(Aside.) No, no! not yet — I cannot!

Count. Ay, how is he,  
That bright inheritor of your eyes — your  
boy?

Lady Giovanna. Alas, my Lord  
Federigo, he hath fallen  
Into a sickness, and it troubles me.

Count. Sick! is it so? why, when  
he came last year  
To see me hawking, he was well enough:  
And then I taught him all our hawking-  
phrases.

Lady Giovanna. Oh yes, and once  
you let him fly your falcon.

Count. How charm'd he was! what  
wonder? — A gallant boy,  
A noble bird, each perfect of the breed.

Lady Giovanna (sinks in chair).  
What do you rate her at?

Count. My bird? a hundred  
Gold pieces once were offer'd by the  
Duke.

I had no heart to part with her for  
money.

Lady Giovanna. 'No, not for money.  
[Count turns away and sighs.

Wherefore do you sigh?  
Count. I have lost a friend of late.

Lady Giovanna. I could sigh with  
you

For fear of losing more than friend, a  
son;

And if he leave me — all the rest of  
life —

That wither'd wreath were of more worth  
to me.

[Looking at wreath on wall.

Count. That wither'd wreath is of  
more worth to me

Than all the blossom, all the leaf of this  
New-wakening year.

[Goes and takes down wreath.

Lady Giovanna. And yet I never saw  
The land so rich in blossom as this year.

Count (holding wreath toward her).  
Was not the year when this was  
gather'd richer?

Lady Giovanna. How long ago was  
that?

Count. Alas, ten summers!  
A lady that was beautiful as day

Sat by me at a rustic festival  
With other beauties on a mountain

meadow,  
And she was the most beautiful of all;

Then but fifteen, and still as beautiful.  
The mountain flowers grew thickly round

about.  
I made a wreath with some of these; I

ask'd

A ribbon from her hair to bind it with;  
I whisper'd, Let me crown you Queen of  
Beauty,

And softly placed the chaplet on her  
head.

A colour, which has colour'd all my life,  
Flush'd in her face; then I was call'd  
away;

And presently all rose, and so departed.  
Ah! she had thrown my chaplet on the  
grass,

And there I found it.

[*Lets his hands fall, holding wreath  
despondingly.*

*Lady Giovanna (after pause).* How  
long since do you say?

*Count.* That was the very year before  
you married.

*Lady Giovanna.* When I was married  
you were at the wars.

*Count.* Had she not thrown my  
chaplet on the grass,

It may be I had never seen the wars.

[*Replaces wreath whence he has taken it.*

*Lady Giovanna.* Ah, but, my lord,  
there ran a rumour then

That you were kill'd in battle. I can

tell you

True tears that year were shed for you in  
Florence.

*Count.* It might have been as well for  
me. Unhappily

I was but wounded by the enemy there

And then imprison'd.

*Lady Giovanna.* Happily, however,  
I see you quite recover'd of your wound.

*Count.* No, no, not quite, Madonna,  
not yet, not yet.

*Re-enter FILIPPO.*

*Filippo.* My lord, a word with you.

*Count.* Pray, pardon me!

[*Lady Giovanna crosses and passes  
behind chair and takes down  
wreath; then goes to chair by  
table.*

*Count (to Filippo).* What is it, Fi-  
lippo?

*Filippo.* Spoons, your lordship.

*Count.* Spoons!

*Filippo.* Yes, my lord, for wasn't my  
lady born with a golden spoon in her  
ladyship's mouth, and we haven't never

so much as a silver one for the golden  
lips of her ladyship.

*Count.* Have we not half a score of  
silver spoons?

*Filippo.* Half o' one, my lord!

*Count.* How half of one?

*Filippo.* I trod upon him even now,  
my lord, in my hurry, and broke him.

*Count.* And the other nine?

*Filippo.* Sold! but shall I not mount  
with your lordship's leave to her lady-  
ship's castle, in your lordship's and her  
ladyship's name, and confer with her  
ladyship's seneschal, and so descend again  
with some of her ladyship's own appur-  
tenances?

*Count.* Why—no, man. Only see  
your cloth be clean. [*Exit Filippo.*

*Lady Giovanna.* Ay, ay, this faded  
ribbon was the mode

In Florence, ten years back. What's  
here? a scroll

Pinn'd to the wreath.

My lord, you have said so much  
Of this poor wreath that I was bold  
enough

To take it down, if but to guess what  
flowers

Had made it; and I find a written scroll  
That seems to run in rhymings. Might  
I read?

*Count.* Ay, if you will.

*Lady Giovanna.* It should be if you  
can.

(*Reads.*) 'Dead mountain.' Nay, for  
who could trace a hand

So wild and staggering?

*Count.* This was penn'd, Madonna,  
Close to the grating on a winter morn  
In the perpetual twilight of a prison,  
When he that made it, having his right  
hand

Lamed in the battle, wrote it with his  
left,

*Lady Giovanna.* O heavens! the  
very letters seem to shake

With cold, with pain perhaps, poor  
prisoner! Well,

Tell me the words— or better— for I see  
There goes a musical score along with  
them,

Repeat them to their music.

*Count.* You can touch

No chord in me that would not answer  
you

In music.

*Lady Giovanna.* That is musically  
said.

[*Count takes guitar. Lady Giovanna sits listening with wreath in her hand, and quietly removes scroll and places it on table at the end of the song.*

*Count (sings, playing guitar).* 'Dead  
mountain flowers, dead mountain-  
meadow flowers,

Dearer than when you made your moun-  
tain gay,

Sweeter than any violet of to-day,  
Richer than all the wide world-wealth of  
May,

To me, tho' all your bloom has died  
away,

You bloom again, dead mountain-meadow  
flowers.'

*Enter ELISABETTA with cloth.*

*Elisabetta.* A word with you, my  
lord!

*Count (singing).* 'O mountain flowers!'

*Elisabetta.* A word, my lord! (*Louder.*)

*Count (sings).* 'Dead flowers!'

*Elisabetta.* A word, my lord!  
(*Louder.*)

*Count.* I pray you pardon me again!

[*Lady Giovanna looking at wreath.*

*Count (to Elisabetta).* What is it?

*Elisabetta.* My lord, we have but  
one piece of earthenware to serve the  
salad in to my lady, and that cracked!

*Count.* Why then, that flower'd bowl  
my ancestor

Fetch'd from the farthest east — we never  
use it

For fear of breakage — but this day has  
brought

A great occasion. You can take it,  
nurse!

*Elisabetta.* I did take it, my lord, but  
what with my lady's coming that had so  
flurried me, and what with the fear of  
breaking it, I did break it, my lord: it is  
broken!

*Count.* My one thing left of value in  
the world!

No matter! see your cloth be white as  
snow!

*Elisabetta (pointing thro' window).*  
White? I warrant thee, my son, as the  
snow yonder on the very tip-top o' the  
mountain.

*Count.* And yet to speak white truth,  
my good old mother,  
I have seen it like the snow on the  
moraine.

*Elisabetta.* How can your lordship  
say so? There, my lord!

[*Lays cloth.*

O my dear son, be not unkind to me.

And one word more. [*Going—returns.*

*Count (touching guitar).* Good! let  
it be but one.

*Elisabetta.* Hath she return'd thy love?

*Count.* Not yet!

*Elisabetta.* And will she?

*Count (looking at Lady Giovanna).* I  
scarce believe it!

*Elisabetta.* Shame upon her then!

[*Exit.*

*Count (sings).* 'Dead mountain  
flowers' —

Ah well, my nurse has broken  
The thread of my dead flowers, as she  
has broken

My china bowl. My memory is as dead.

[*Goes and replaces guitar.*  
Strange that the words at home with me

so long

Should fly like bosom friends when needed  
most.

So by your leave if you would hear the  
rest,

The writing.

*Lady Giovanna (holding wreath toward him).* There! my lord, you  
are a poet,

And can you not imagine that the wreath,  
Set, as you say, so lightly on her head,  
Fell with her motion as she rose, and she,  
A girl, a child, then but fifteen, however  
Flutter'd or flatter'd by your notice of her,  
Was yet too bashful to return for it?

*Count.* Was it so indeed? was it so?  
was it so?

[*Leans forward to take wreath, and touches Lady Giovanna's hand, which she withdraws hastily; he places wreath on corner of chair.*

*Lady Giovanna (with dignity).* I did not say, my lord, that it was so; I said you might imagine it was so.

*Enter FILIPPO with bowl of salad, which he places on table.*

*Filippo.* Here's a fine salad for my lady, for tho' we have been a soldier, and ridden by his lordship's side, and seen the red of the battle-field, yet are we now drill-sergeant to his lordship's lettuces, and profess to be great in green things and in garden-stuff.

*Lady Giovanna.* I thank thee, good Filippo. [*Exit Filippo.*]

*Enter ELISABETTA with bird on a dish which she places on table.*

*Elisabetta (close to table).* Here's a fine fowl for my lady; I had scant time to do him in. I hope he be not underdone, for we be undone in the doing of him.

*Lady Giovanna.* I thank you, my good nurse.

*Filippo (re-entering with plate of prunes).* And here are fine fruits for my lady—prunes, my lady, from the tree that my lord himself planted here in the blossom of his boyhood—and so I, Filippo, being, with your ladyship's pardon, and as your ladyship knows, his lordship's own foster-brother, would commend them to your ladyship's most peculiar appreciation.

[*Puts plate on table.*]

*Elisabetta.* Filippo!

*Lady Giovanna (Count leads her to table).* Will you not eat with me, my lord?

*Count.* I cannot, Not a morsel, not one morsel. I have broken

My fast already. I will pledge you.

Wine!

Filippo, wine!  
[*Sits near table; Filippo brings flask, fills the Count's goblet, then Lady Giovanna's; Elisabetta stands at the back of Lady Giovanna's chair.*]

*Count.* It is but thin and cold, Not like the vintage blowing round your castle.

We lie too deep down in the shadow here.

Your ladyship lives higher in the sun.

[*They pledge each other and drink.*]

*Lady Giovanna.* If I might send you down a flask or two Of that same vintage? There is iron in it. It has been much commended as a medicine.

I give it my sick son, and if you be Not quite recover'd of your wound, the wine

Might help you. None has ever told me yet

The story of your battle and your wound. *Filippo (coming forward).* I can tell you, my lady, I can tell you.

*Elisabetta.* Filippo! will you take the word out of your master's own mouth?

*Filippo.* Was it there to take? Put it there, my lord.

*Count.* Giovanna, my dear lady, in this same battle

We had been beaten—they were ten to one.

The trumpets of the fight had echo'd down,

I and Filippo here had done our best, And, having passed unwounded from the field,

Were seated sadly at a fountain side, Our horses grazing by us, when a troop, Laden with booty and with a flag of curs Ta'en in the fight—

*Filippo.* Ay, but we fought for it back, And kill'd—

*Elisabetta.* Filippo!

*Count.* A troop of horse—

*Filippo.* Five hundred!

*Count.* Say fifty!

*Filippo.* And we kill'd 'em by the score!

*Elisabetta.* Filippo!

*Filippo.* Well, well, well! I bite my tongue.

*Count.* We may have left their fifty less by five.

However, staying not to count how many, But anger'd at their flaunting of our flag, We mounted, and we dash'd into the heart of 'em.

I wore the lady's chaplet round my neck; It served me for a blessed rosary.

I am sure that more than one brave fellow owed

His death to the charm in it.

*Elisabetta.* Hear that, my lady!

*Count.* I cannot tell how long we strove before

Our horses fell beneath us; down we went

Crush'd, hack'd at, trampled underfoot.

The night,

As some cold-manner'd friend may strangely do us

The truest service, had a touch of frost That help'd to check the flowing of the blood.

My last sight ere I swoon'd was one sweet face

Crown'd with the wreath. *That seem'd to come and go.*

They left us there for dead!

*Elisabetta.* Hear that, my lady!

*Filippo.* Ay, and I left two fingers there for dead. See, my lady! (*Showing his hand.*)

*Lady Giovanna.* I see, Filippo!

*Filippo.* And I have small hope of the gentleman gout in my great toe.

*Lady Giovanna.* And why, Filippo? [*Smiling absently.*]

*Filippo.* I left him there for dead, too!

*Elisabetta.* She smiles at him — how hard the woman is!

My lady, if your ladyship were not Too proud to look upon the garland, you Would find it stain'd —

*Count (rising).* Silence, Elisabetta!

*Elisabetta.* — Stain'd with the blood of the best heart that ever

Beat for one woman.

[*Points to wreath on chair.*]

*Lady Giovanna (rising slowly).* I can eat no more!

*Count.* You have but trifled with our homely salad,

But dallied with a single lettuce-leaf; Not eaten anything.

*Lady Giovanna.* Nay, nay, I cannot. You know, my lord, I told you I was troubled.

My one child Florio lying still so sick, I bound myself, and by a solemn vow, That I would touch no flesh till he were well

Here, or else well in Heaven, where all is well.

[*Elisabetta clears table of bird and salad: Filippo snatches up the plate of prunes and holds them to Lady Giovanna.*]

*Filippo.* But the prunes, my lady, from the tree that his lordship —

*Lady Giovanna.* Not now, Filippo.

My lord Federigo,

Can I not speak with you once more alone?

*Count.* You hear, Filippo? My good fellow, go!

*Filippo.* But the prunes that your lordship —

*Elisabetta.* Filippo!

*Count.* Ay, prune our company of thine own and go!

*Elisabetta.* Filippo!

*Filippo (turning).* Well, well! the women! [*Exit.*]

*Count.* And thou too leave us, my dear nurse, alone.

*Elisabetta (folding up cloth and going).*

And me too! Ay, the dear nurse will leave you alone; but, for all that, she that has eaten the yolk is scarce like to swallow the shell.

[*Turns and curtsseys stiffly to Lady Giovanna, then exit. Lady Giovanna takes out diamond necklace from casket.*]

*Lady Giovanna.* I have anger'd your good nurse; these old-world servants

Are all but flesh and blood with those they serve.

My lord, I have a present to return you, And afterwards a boon to crave of you.

*Count.* No, my most honour'd and long-worshipt lady,

Poor Federigo degli Alberighi Takes nothing in return from you except Return of his affection — can deny Nothing to you that you require of him.

*Lady Giovanna.* Then I require you to take back your diamonds —

[*Offering necklace.*]

I doubt not they are yours. No other heart

Of such magnificence in courtesy

Beats — out of heaven. They seem'd too rich a prize

To trust with any messenger. I came  
In person to return them.

[*Count draws back.*

If the phrase

'Return' displease you, we will say —  
exchange them

For your — for your —

*Count (takes a step toward her and then back).* For mine — and what of mine?

*Lady Giovanna.* Well, shall we say this wreath and your sweet rhymes?

*Count.* But have you ever worn my diamonds?

*Lady Giovanna.* No!

For that would seem accepting of your love.

I cannot brave my brother — but be sure  
That I shall never marry again, my lord!

*Count.* Sure?

*Lady Giovanna.* Yes!

*Count.* Is this your brother's order?  
*Lady Giovanna.* No!

For he would marry me to the richest man

In Florence; but I think you know the saying —

'Better a man without riches, than riches  
without a man.'

*Count.* A noble saying — and acted  
on would yield

A nobler breed of men and women.  
Lady,

I find you a shrewd bargainer. The wreath

That once you wore outvalues twenty-fold

The diamonds that you never deign'd to wear.

But lay them there for a moment!

[*Points to table.* *Lady Giovanna places necklace on table.*

And be you gracious enough to let me know the boon  
By granting which, if aught be mine to grant,

I should be made more happy than I hoped

Ever to be again.

*Lady Giovanna.* Then keep your wreath,

But you will find me a shrewd bargainer still.

I cannot keep your diamonds, for the gift

I ask for, to my mind and at this present  
Outvalues all the jewels upon earth.

*Count.* It should be love that thus  
outvalues all.

You speak like love, and yet you love  
me not.

I have nothing in this world but love for you.

*Lady Giovanna.* Love? it is love,  
love for my dying boy,

Moves me to ask it of you.

*Count.* What? my time?

Is it my time? Well, I can give my  
time

To him that is a part of you, your son.

Shall I return to the castle with you?  
Shall I

Sit by him, read to him, tell him my  
tales,

Sing him my songs? You know that I  
can touch

The ghittern to some purpose.

*Lady Giovanna.* No, not that!

I thank you heartily for that — and  
you,

I doubt not from your nobleness of  
nature,

Will pardon me for asking what I ask.

*Count.* Giovanna, dear Giovanna, I  
that once

The wildest of the random youth of  
Florence

Before I saw you — all my nobleness

Of nature, as you deign to call it, draws  
From you, and from my constancy to you.

No more, but speak.

*Lady Giovanna.* I will. You know  
sick people,

More specially sick children, have strange  
fancies,

Strange longings; and to thwart them  
in their mood

May work them grievous harm at times,  
may even

Hasten their end. I would you had a  
son!

It might be easier then for you to make  
Allowance for a mother — her — who  
comes



To rob you of your one delight on earth.  
How often has my sick boy yearn'd for  
this!

I have put him off as often; but to-day  
I dared not — so much weaker, so much  
worse

For last day's journey. I was weeping  
for him;

He gave me his hand: 'I should be well  
again

If the good Count would give me ——'

*Count.* Give me.

*Lady Giovanna.* His falcon.

*Count (starts back).* My falcon!

*Lady Giovanna.* Yes, your falcon,  
Federigo!

*Count.* Alas, I cannot!

*Lady Giovanna.* Cannot? Even so!  
I fear'd as much. O this unhappy  
world!

How shall I break it to him? how shall  
I tell him?

The boy may die: more blessed were  
the rags

Of some pale beggar-woman seeking alms  
For her sick son, if he were like to live,  
Than all my childless wealth, if mine  
must die.

I was to blame — the love you said you  
bore me —

My lord, we thank you for your enter-  
tainment [*With a stately curtsy.*  
And so return — Heaven help him! — to  
our son. [*Turns.*

*Count (rushes forward).* Stay, stay,  
I am most unlucky, most unhappy.

You never had look'd in on me before,  
And when you came and dipt your  
sovereign head

Thro' these low doors, you ask'd to eat  
with me.

I had but emptiness to set before you,  
No not a draught of milk, no not an egg,  
Nothing but my brave bird, my noble  
falcon,

My comrade of the house, and of the field.  
She had to die for it — she died for you.  
Perhaps I thought with those of old, the  
nobler

The victim was, the more acceptable  
Might be the sacrifice. I fear you scarce  
Will thank me for your entertainment  
now.

*Lady Giovanna (returning).* I bear  
with him no longer.

*Count.* No, Madonna!  
And he will have to bear with it as he  
may.

*Lady Giovanna.* I break with him  
for ever!

*Count.* Yes, Giovanna,  
But he will keep his love for you for  
ever!

*Lady Giovanna.* You? you? not  
you! My brother! my hard  
brother!

O Federigo, Federigo, I love you!  
Spite of ten thousand brothers, Federigo.  
[*Falls at his feet.*

*Count (impetuously).* Why then the  
dying of my noble bird

Hath served me better than her living —  
then

[*Takes diamonds from table.*

These diamonds are both yours and mine  
— have won

Their value again — beyond all markets  
— there

I lay them for the first time round your  
neck.

[*Lays necklace round her neck.*

And then this chaplet — No more feuds,  
but peace,

Peace and conciliation! I will make  
Your brother love me. See, I tear away  
The leaves were darken'd by the bat-  
tle —

[*Pulls leaves off and throws them down.*  
— crown you

Again with the same crown my Queen  
of Beauty.

[*Places wreath on her head.*

Rise — I could almost think that the  
dead garland

Will break once more into the living  
blossom.

Nay, nay, I pray you rise.

[*Raises her with both hands.*

We two together  
Will help to heal your son — your son  
and mine —

We shall do it — we shall do it.

[*Embraces her.*

The purpose of my being is accomplish'd,  
And I am happy!

*Lady Giovanna.* And I too, Federigo

# THE PROMISE OF MAY.

'A surface man of theories, true to none.'

## DRAMATIS PERSONÆ.

FARMER DOBSON.  
MR. PHILIP EDGAR (*afterwards* Mr. HAROLD).  
FARMER STEER (*DORA and EVA's Father*).  
MR. WILSON (*a Schoolmaster*).  
HIGGINS }  
JAMES } *Farm Labourers.*  
DAN SMITH }  
JACKSON }  
ALLEN }  
DORA STEER.  
EVA STEER.  
SALLY ALLEN } *Farm Servants.*  
MILLY }  
Farm Servants, Labourers, etc.

## ACT I.

SCENE. — BEFORE FARMHOUSE.

*Farming Men and Women. Farming Men carrying forms, etc. Women carrying baskets of knives and forks, etc.*

*1st Farming Man.* Be thou a-gawin' to the long barn?

*2nd Farming Man.* Ay, to be sewer! Be thou?

*1st Farming Man.* Why, o' coorse, fur it be the owd man's birthdaäy. He be heighty this very daäy, and 'e telled all on us to be i' the long barn by one o'clock, fur he'll gie us a big dinner, and haäfe th' parish 'll be theer, an' Miss Dora, an' Miss Eva, an' all!

*2nd Farming Man.* Miss Dora be coomed back, then?

*1st Farming Man.* Ay, haäfe an hour ago. She be in theer now. (*Pointing to house.*) Owd Steer wur afeärd she wouldn't be back i' time to keep his birthdaäy, and he wur in a tew about it all the murnin'; and he sent me wi' the gig to Littlechester to fetch 'er; and 'er an' the owd man they fell a-kissin' o' one another like two sweet'arts i' the poorch as soon as he clapt eyes of 'er.

*2nd Farming Man.* Foälks says he likes Miss Eva the best.

*1st Farming Man.* Nääy, I knaws nowt o' what foälks says, an' I caäres nowt neither. Foälks doesn't hallus know thessens; but sewer I be, they be two o' the purtiest gels ye can see of a summer murnin'.

*2nd Farming Man.* Beänt Miss Eva gone off a bit of 'er good looks o' laäte?

*1st Farming Man.* Noä, not a bit.

*2nd Farming Man.* Why coöm awaäy, then, to the long barn.

[*Exeunt.*]

DORA looks out of window. Enter DOBSON.

*Dora (singing).*

The town lay still in the low sun-light,  
The hen cluckt late by the white farm gate,  
The maid to her dairy came in from the cow,

The stock-dove coo'd at the fall of night,  
The blossom had open'd on every bough;

O joy for the promise of May, of May,

O joy for the promise of May.

(*Nodding at Dobson.*) I'm coming down, Mr. Dobson. I haven't seen Eva yet. Is she anywhere in the garden?

*Dobson.* Noä, Miss. I ha'n't seed 'er neither.

*Dora (enters singing).*

But a red fire woke in the heart of the town,

And a fox from the glen ran away with the hen,

And a cat to the cream, and a rat to the cheese;

And the stock-dove coo'd, till a kite dropt down,

And a salt wind burnt the blossoming trees;

O grief for the promise of May, of May,

O grief for the promise of May.

I don't know why I sing that song; I don't love it.

*Dobson.* Blessings on your pretty voice, Miss Dora. Wheer did they larn ye that?

*Dora.* In Cumberland, Mr. Dobson.

*Dobson.* An' how did ye læve the owd uncle i' Coomberland?

*Dora.* Getting better, Mr. Dobson. But he'll never be the same man again.

*Dobson.* An' how d'ye find the owd man 'ere?

*Dora.* As well as ever. I came back to keep his birthday.

*Dobson.* Well, I be coomed to keep his birthdaäy an' all. The owd man be heighty to-daäy, beänt he?

*Dora.* Yes, Mr. Dobson. And the day's bright like a friend, but the wind east like an enemy. Help me to move this bench for him into the sun. (*They move bench.*) No, not that way—here, under the apple tree. Thank you. Look how full of rosy blossom it is.

[*Pointing to apple tree.*]

*Dobson.* Theer be redder blossoms nor them, Miss Dora.

*Dora.* Where do they blow, Mr. Dobson?

*Dobson.* Under your eyes, Miss Dora.

*Dora.* Do they?

*Dobson.* And your eyes be as blue as—

*Dora.* What, Mr. Dobson? A butcher's frock?

*Dobson.* Noä, Miss Dora; as blue as—

*Dora.* Bluebell, harebell, speedwell, bluebottle, succory, forget-me-not?

*Dobson.* Noä, Miss Dora; as blue as—

*Dora.* The sky? or the sea on a blue day?

*Dobson.* Naäy then. I meän'd they be as blue as violets.

*Dora.* Are they?

*Dobson.* Theer ye goäs ageän, Miss, niver believing owt I says to ye—hallus a-fobbing ma off, tho' ye knaws I love ye. I warrants ye'll think moor o' this young Squire Edgar as ha' coomed among us—the Lord knaws how—ye'll think more on 'is little finger than hall my hand at the haltar.

*Dora.* Perhaps, Master Dobson. I can't tell, for I have never seen him. But my sister wrote that he was mighty pleasant, and had no pride in him.

*Dobson.* He'll be arter you now, Miss Dora.

*Dora.* Will he? How can I tell?

*Dobson.* He's been arter Miss Eva, haänt he?

*Dora.* Not that I know.

*Dobson.* Didn't I spy 'em a-sitting i' the woodbine harbour together?

*Dora.* What of that? Eva told me that he was taking her likeness. He's an artist.

*Dobson.* What's a hartist? I doänt believe he's iver a 'eart under his waist-coat. And I tells ye what, Miss Dora: he's no respect for the Queen, or the parson, or the justice o' peace, or owt. I ha' heärd 'im a-gawin' on' 'ud make your 'air—God bless it!—stan' 'on end. And wuss nor that. When theer wur a meeting o' farmers at Littlechester t'other daäy, and they was all a-crying out at the bad times, he cooms up, and he calls out among our oän men, 'The land belongs to the people!'

*Dora.* And what did you say to that?

*Dobson.* Well, I says, s'pose my pig's the land, and you says it belongs to the parish, and theer be a thousand i' the parish, taäkin' in the women and childer; and s'pose I kills my pig, and g'ies it among 'em, why there wudn't be a dinner for nawbody, and I should ha' lost the pig.

*Dora.* And what did he say to that?

*Dobson.* Nowt — what could he saäy? But I taäkes 'im fur a bad lot and a burn fool, and I haätes the very sight on him.

*Dora* (*looking at Dobson*). Master Dobson, you are a comely man to look at.

*Dobson.* I thank you for that, Miss Dora, onyhow.

*Dora.* Ay, but you turn right ugly when you're in an ill temper; and I promise you that if you forget yourself in your behaviour to this gentleman, my father's friend, I will never change word with you again.

*Enter FARMING MAN from barn.*

*Farming Man.* Miss, the farming men 'ull hev their dinner i' the long barn, and the master 'ud be straänge an' pleased if you'd step in fust, and see that all be right and reg'lar fur 'em afoor he coöm.

[*Exit.*

*Dora.* I go. Master Dobson, did you hear what I said?

*Dobson.* Yeäs, yeäs! I'll not meddle wi' 'im if he doänt meddle wi' meä. (*Exit Dora.*) Coomly, says she. I niver thowt o' mysen i' that waäy; but if she'd taäk to ma i' that waäy, or ony waäy, I'd slaäve out my life fur 'er. 'Coomly to look at,' says she — but she said it spiteful-like. To look at — yeäs, 'coomly'; and she mayn't be so fur out their. But if that be nowt to she, then it be nowt to me. (*Looking off stage.*) Schoolmaster! Why if Steer ha'n't haxed schoolmaster to dinner, thaw 'e knaws I was hallus ageän hevving schoolmaster i' the parish! fur him as be handy wi' a book beän't but haäfe a hand at a pitchfork.

*Enter WILSON.*

Well, Wilson. I seed that one cow o' thine i' the pinfold ageän as I wur a-coömin' 'ere.

*Wilson.* Very likely, Mr. Dobson. She *will* break fence. I can't keep her in order.

*Dobson.* An' if tha can't keep thy one cow i' horder, how can tha keep all thy scholars i' horder? But let that goä by. What dost a know o' this Mr. Hedgar as be a-lodgin' wi' ye? I

coom'd upon 'im t'other daäy lookin' at the coontry, then a-scrattin upon a bit o' paäper, then a-lookin' agean; and I taäked 'im fur soom sort of a land-surveyor — but a beänt.

*Wilson.* He's a Somersetshire man, and a very civil-spoken gentleman.

*Dobson.* Gentleman! What be he a-doing here ten mile an' moor fro' a raäü? We laäys out o' the waäy fur gentlefoälk altogether — leästwaäys they niver cooms 'ere but fur the trout i' our beck, fur they be know'd as far as Littlechester. But 'e doänt fish neither.

*Wilson.* Well, it's no sin in a gentleman not to fish.

*Dobson.* Noä, but I haätes 'im.

*Wilson.* Better step out of his road, then, for he's walking to us, and with a book in his hand.

*Dobson.* An' I haätes booöks an' all, fur they puts foälk off the owd waäys.

*Enter EDGAR, reading — not seeing DOBSON and WILSON.*

*Edgar.* This author, with his charm of simple style

And close dialectic, all but proving man  
An automatic series of sensations,  
Has often numb'd me into apathy  
Against the unpleasant jolts of this rough road

That breaks off short into the abysses —  
made me

A Quietist taking all things easily.

*Dobson.* (*Aside.*) There mun be summat wrong theer, 'Wilson, fur I doänt understan' it.

*Wilson.* (*Aside.*) Nor I either, Mr. Dobson.

*Dobson* (*scornfully*). An' thou doänt understan' it neither — and thou schoolmaster an' all.

*Edgar.* What can a man, then, live for but sensations,  
Pleasant ones? men of old would undergo

Unpleasant for the sake of pleasant ones  
Hereafter, like the Moslem beauties waiting

To clasp their lovers by the golden gates.  
For me, whose cheerless Houris after death

Are Night and Silence, pleasant ones —  
the while —  
If possible, here! to crop the flower and  
pass.

*Dobson.* Well, I never 'eärd the likes  
o' that afoor.

*Wilson.* (*Aside.*) But I have, Mr.  
Dobson. It's the old Scripture text,  
'Let us eat and drink, for to-morrow we  
die.' I'm sorry for it, for, tho' he never  
comes to church, I thought better of  
him.

*Edgar.* 'What are we,' says the blind  
old man in Lear?

'As flies to the Gods; they kill us for  
their sport.'

*Dobson.* (*Aside.*) Then the owd man  
i' Lear should be shaämed of hissen, but  
noän o' the parishes goäs by that naäme  
'ereabouts.

*Edgar.* The Gods! but they, the  
shadows of ourselves,

Have past for ever. It is Nature kills,  
And not for *her* sport either. She knows  
nothing.

Man only knows, the worse for him! for  
why

Cannot *he* take his pastime like the flies?  
And if my pleasure breed another's pain,  
Well — is not that the course of Nature  
too,

From the dim dawn of Being — her main  
law

Whereby she grows in beauty — that her  
flies

Must massacre each other? this poor  
Nature!

*Dobson.* Natur! Natur! Well, it  
be i' *my* natur to knock 'im o' the 'eärd  
now; but I weänt.

*Edgar.* A Quietist taking all things  
easily — why —

Have I been dipping into this again  
To steel myself against the leaving her?

[*Closes book, seeing Wilson.*]

Good day!

*Wilson.* Good day, sir.

[*Dobson looks hard at Edgar.*]

*Edgar* (*to Dobson*). Have I the  
pleasure, friend, of knowing you?

*Dobson.* Dobson.

*Edgar.* Good day, then, Dobson.

[*Exit.*]

*Dobson.* 'Good daäy then, Dobson!'  
Civil-spoken i'deed! Why, Wilson, tha  
'eärd 'im thysen — the feller couldn't find  
a Mister in his mouth fur me, as farms  
five hoonderd haäcre.

*Wilson.* You never find one for me,  
Mr. Dobson.

*Dobson.* Noä, fur thou be nobbut  
schoolmaster; but I taäkes 'im for a  
Lunmun swindler, and a burn fool.

*Wilson.* He can hardly be both, and  
he pays me regular every Saturday.

*Dobson.* Yeäs; but I haätes 'im.

*Enter STEER, FARM MEN and WOMEN.*

*Steer* (*goes and sits under apple tree*).  
Hev' ony o' ye seen Eva?

*Dobson.* Noä, Mr. Steer.

*Steer.* Well, I reckons they'll hev' a  
fine cider-crop to-year if the blossom  
'owds. Good murnin', neighbours, and  
the saäme to you, my men. I taäkes it  
kindly of all o' you that you be coomed  
— what's the newspäaper word, Wilson?  
— celebrate — to celebrate my birthdaäy  
i' this fashion. Niver man 'ed better  
friends, and I will saäy niver master 'ed  
better men: fur thaw I may ha' fallen out  
wi' ye sometimes, the fault, mebbe, wur  
as much mine as yours; and, thaw I says  
it mysen, niver men 'ed a better master —  
and I knaws what men be, and what  
masters be, fur I wur nobbut a laäbourer,  
and now I be a landlord — burn a plow-  
man, and now, as far as money goäs, I be  
a gentleman, thaw I beänt naw scholar,  
fur I 'edn't naw time to maäke mysen a  
scholar while I wur maäkin' mysen a  
gentleman, but I ha' taäen good care to  
turn out boäth my darters right down  
fine laädies.

*Dobson.* An' soä they be.

*1st Farming Man.* Soä they be! soä  
they be!

*2nd Farming Man.* The Lord bless  
boath on 'em!

*3rd Farming Man.* An' the saäme  
to you, Master.

*4th Farming Man.* And long life to  
boath on 'em. An' the saäme to you,  
Master Steer, likewise.

*Steer.* Thank ye!

*Enter Eva.*

Wheer 'asta been?

*Eva (timidly).* Many happy returns of the day, father.

*Steer.* They can't be many, my dear, but I 'oäpes they'll be 'appy.

*Dobson.* Why, tha looks haäle anew to last to a hoonderd.

*Steer.* An' why shouldn't I last to a hoonderd? Haäle! why shouldn't I be haäle? fur thaw I be heighty this very daäy, I niver 'es sa much as one pin's prick of paäin; an' I can taäke my glass along wi' the youngest, fur I niver touched a drop of owt till my oän wedding-daäy, an' then I wur turned huppads o' sixty. Why shouldn't I be haäle? I ha' plowed the ten-aäcre—it be mine now—afoor ony o' ye wur burn—ye all knaws the ten-aäcre—I mun ha' plowed it moor nor a hoonderd times; hallus hup at sunrise, and I'd drive the plow straäit as a line right i' the faäce o' the sun, then back ageän, a-follering my oän shadder—then hup ageän i' the faäce o' the sun. Eh! how the sun 'ud shine, and the larks 'ud sing i' them daäys, and the smell o' the mou'd an' all. Eh! if I could ha' gone on wi' the plowin' nobbut the smell o' the mou'd 'ud ha' maäde ma live as long as Jerusalem.

*Eva.* Methusaleh, father.

*Steer.* Ay, lass, but when thou be as owd as me thou'll put one word fur another as I does.

*Dobson.* But, Steer, thaw thou be haäle anew I seed tha a-limpin' up just now wi' the roomatics i' the knee.

*Steer.* Roomatics! Noä; I laäme't my knee last night running arter a thief. Beänt there house-breäkers down i' Littlechester, Dobson—doänt ye hear of ony?

*Dobson.* Ay, that there be. Immanuel Goldsmith's was broke into o' Monday night, and ower a hoonderd pounds' worth o' rings stolen.

*Steer.* So I thowt, and I heärd the winder—that's the winder at the end o' the passage, that goäs by thy chamber. (*Turning to Eva.*) Why, lass, what maäkes tha sa red? Did 'e git into thy chamber?

*Eva.* Father!

*Steer.* Well, I runned arter thief i' the dark, and fell ageän coalscuttle and my kneeä gev waäy or I'd ha' cotched 'im, but afoor I coomed up he got thruff the winder ageän.

*Eva.* Got thro' the window again?

*Steer.* Ay, but he left the mark of 'is foot i' the flower-bed; now there be noän o' my men, thinks I to mysen, 'ud ha' done it 'cep' it were Dan Smith, fur I cotched 'im once a-steälin' coäls, an' I sent fur 'im, an' I measured his foot wi' the mark i' the bed, but it wouldn't fit—seeäms to me the mark wur maäde by a Lunnun boot. (*Looks at Eva.*) Why, now, what maäkes tha sa white?

*Eva.* Fright, father!

*Steer.* Maäke thysen eäsy. I'll hev the winder naäiled up, and put Towser under it.

*Eva (clasping her hands).* No, no, father! Towser'll tear him all to pieces.

*Steer.* Let him keep awaäy, then; but coom, coom! let's be gawin'. They ha' broached a barrel of aäle i' the long barn, and the fiddler be theer, and the lads and lasses 'ull hev a dance.

*Eva. (Aside.)* Dance! small heart have I to dance. I should seem to be dancing upon a grave.

*Steer.* Wheer be Mr. Edgar? about the premises?

*Dobson.* Hallus about the premises!

*Steer.* So much the better, so 'much the better. I likes 'im, and Eva likes 'im. Eva can do owt wi' 'im; look for 'im, Eva, and bring 'im to the barn. He 'ant naw pride in 'im, and we'll git 'im to speechify for us arter dinner.

*Eva.* Yes, father! [*Exit.*]

*Steer.* Coom along then, all the rest o' ye! Churchwarden be a-coomin', thaw me and 'im we niver 'grees about the tith; and Parson mebbe, thaw he niver mended that gap i' the glebe fence as I telled 'im; and Blacksmith, thaw he niver shoes a herse to my likings; and Baäker, thaw I sticks to hoäm-maäde—but all on 'em welcome, all on 'em welcome; and I've hed the long barn cleared out of all the machines, and the sacks, and the taäters, and the mangles, and



theer'll be room anew for all o' ye.  
Foller me.

*All.* Yeäs, yeäs! Three cheers for  
Mr. Steer!

[*All exeunt except Dobson into barn.*]

*Enter EDGAR.*

*Dobson (who is going, turns).* Squire!  
—if so be you be a squire.

*Edgar.* Dobbins, I think.

*Dobson.* Dobbins, you thinks; and I  
thinks ye weärs a Lunnun boot.

*Edgar.* Well?

*Dobson.* And I thinks I'd like to  
täake the measure o' your foot.

*Edgar.* Ay, if you'd like to measure  
your own length upon the grass.

*Dobson.* Coom, coom, that's a good  
un. Why, I could throw four o' ye;  
but I promised one of the Misses I  
wouldn't meddle wi' ye, and I weänt.

[*Exit into barn.*]

*Edgar.* Jealous of me with Eva! Is  
it so?

Well, tho' I grudge the pretty jewel, that  
I

Have worn, to such a clod, yet that  
might be

The best way out of it, if the child could  
keep

Her counsel. I am sure I wish her  
happy.

But I must free myself from this en-  
tanglement.

I have all my life before me—so has  
she—

Give her a month or two, and her affec-  
tions

Will flower toward the light in some new  
face.

Still I am half-afraid to meet her now.  
She will urge marriage on me. I hate  
tears.

Marriage is but an old tradition. I hate  
Traditions, ever since my narrow father,

After my frolic with his tenant's girl,  
Made younger elder son, violated the

whole  
Tradition of our land, and left his heir,

Born, happily, with some sense of art, to  
live

By brush and pencil. By and by, when  
Thought

Comes down among the crowd, and man  
perceives that

The lost gleam of an after-life but leaves  
him

A beast of prey in the dark, why then  
the crowd

May wreak my wrongs upon my wrongers.  
Marriage!

That fine, fat, hook-nosed uncle of mine,  
old Harold,

Who leaves me all his land at Little-  
chester,

He, too, would oust me from his will,  
if I

Made such a marriage. And marriage  
in itself—

The storm is hard at hand will sweep  
away

Thrones, churches, ranks, traditions,  
customs, marriage

One of the feeblest! Then the man, the  
woman,

Following their best affinities, will each  
Bid their old bond farewell with smiles,  
not tears;

Good wishes, not reproaches; with no  
fear

Of the world's gossiping clamour, and no  
need

Of veiling their desires.

Conventionalism,  
Who shrieks by day at what she does by  
night,

Would call this vice; but one time's vice  
may be

The virtue of another; and Vice and  
Virtue

Are but two masks of self; and what  
hereafter

Shall mark out Vice from Virtue in the  
gulf

Of never-dawning darkness?

*Enter EVA.*

My sweet Eva,  
Where have you lain in ambush all the  
morning?

They say your sister, Dora, has return'd,  
And that should make you happy, if you

love her!

But you look troubled.  
*Eva.* Oh, I love her so,  
I was afraid of her, and I hid myself.



*Eva.* But all that sounds so wicked  
and so strange;  
'Till death-us part' — those are the only  
words,  
The true ones — nay, and those not true  
enough,  
For they that love do not believe that  
death  
Will part them. Why do you jest with  
me, and try  
To fright me? Tho' you are a gentle-  
man,  
I but a farmer's daughter —

*Edgar.* Tut! you talk  
Old feudalism. When the great Democ-  
racy

Makes a new world —  
*Eva.* And if you be not jesting,  
Neither the old world, nor the new, nor  
father,  
Sister, nor you, shall ever see me more.

*Edgar (moved).* Then — (*aside*) Shall  
I say it? — (*aloud*) fly with me  
to-day.

*Eva.* No! Philip, Philip, if you do  
not marry me,  
I shall go mad for utter shame and  
die.

*Edgar.* Then, if we needs must be  
conventional,  
When shall your parish-parson bawl our  
banns  
Before your gaping clowns?

*Eva.* Not in our church —  
I think I scarce could hold my head up  
there.

Is there no other way?  
*Edgar.* Yes, if you cared  
To fee an over-opulent superstition,  
Then they would grant you what they  
call a license

To marry. Do you wish it?  
*Eva.* Do I wish it?

*Edgar.* In London.

*Eva.* You will write to me?  
*Edgar.* I will.

*Eva.* And I will fly to you thro' the  
night, the storm —  
Yes, tho' the fire should run along the  
ground,  
As once it did in Egypt. Oh, you see,  
I was just out of school, I had no  
mother —

My sister far away — and you, a gentle-  
man,

Told me to trust you: yes, in every-  
thing —

That was the only true love; and I  
trusted —

Oh, yes, indeed, I would have died for  
you.

How could you — oh, how could you?  
— nay, how could I?

But now you will set all right again,  
and I

Shall not be made the laughter of the  
village,

And poor old father not die miserable.

*Dora (singing in the distance).*

O joy for the promise of May, of  
May,

O joy for the promise of May.

*Edgar.* Speak not so loudly; that  
must be your sister.

You never told her, then, of what has  
past

Between us.

*Eva.* Never!

*Edgar.* Do not till I bid you.

*Eva.* No, Philip, no. [*Turns away.*]

*Edgar (moved).* How gracefully  
there she stands.

Weeping — the little Niobe! What! we  
prize

The statue or the picture all the more  
When we have made them ours! Is she  
less lovable,

Less lovely, being wholly mine? To  
stay —

Follow my art among these quiet fields,  
Live with these honest folk —

And play the fool!  
No! she that gave herself to me so easily  
Will yield herself as easily to another.

*Eva.* Did you speak, Philip?

*Edgar.* Nothing more, farewell.  
[*They embrace.*]

*Dora (coming nearer).*

O grief for the promise of May, of  
May,

O grief for the promise of May.

*Edgar (still embracing her).* Keep  
up your heart until we meet  
again.

*Eva.* If that should break before we  
meet again?

*Edgar.* Break! nay, but call for Philip when you will,  
And he returns.

*Eva.* \*Heaven hears you, Philip Edgar!

*Edgar (moved).* And he would hear you even from the grave.  
Heaven curse him if he come not at your call! [Exit.

*Enter DORA.*

*Dora.* Well, Eva!

*Eva.* Oh, Dora, Dora, how long you have been away from home! Oh, how often I have wished for you! It seemed to me that we were parted for ever.

*Dora.* For ever, you foolish child! What's come over you? We parted like the brook yonder about the alder island, to come together again in a moment and to go on together again, till one of us be married. But where is this Mr. Edgar whom you praised so in your first letters? You haven't even mentioned him in your last?

*Eva.* He has gone to London.

*Dora.* Ay, child; and you look thin and pale. Is it for his absence? Have you fancied yourself in love with him? That's all nonsense, you know, such a baby as you are. But you shall tell me all about it.

*Eva.* Not now,—presently. Yes, I have been in trouble, but I am happy—I think, quite happy now.

*Dora (taking Eva's hand).* Come, then, and make them happy in the long barn, for father is in his glory, and there is a piece of beef like a house-side, and a plum-pudding as big as the round haystack. But see they are coming out for the dance already. Well, my child, let us join them.

*Enter all from barn laughing. EVA sits reluctantly under apple tree. STEER enters smoking, sits by EVA.*

*Dance.*

## ACT II.

*Five years have elapsed between Acts I. and II.*

SCENE.—A MEADOW. ON ONE SIDE A PATHWAY GOING OVER A RUSTIC BRIDGE. AT BACK THE FARMHOUSE AMONG TREES. IN THE DISTANCE A CHURCH SPIRE.

*DOBSON and DORA.*

*Dobson.* So the owd uncle i' Coomberland be deäð, Miss Dora, beänt he?

*Dora.* Yes, Mr. Dobson, I've been attending on his deathbed and his burial.

*Dobson.* It be five year sin' ye went afor to him, and it seems to me nobbut t'other day. Hesn't he left ye nowt?

*Dora.* No, Mr. Dobson.

*Dobson.* But he were mighty fond o' ye, warn't he?

*Dora.* Fonder of poor Eva—like everybody else.

*Dobson (handing Dora basket of roses).* Not like me, Miss Dora; and I ha' browt these roses to ye—I forgits what they calls 'em, but I hallus gi'ed soom on 'em to Miss Eva at this time o' year. Will ya taäke 'em? fur Miss Eva, she set the bush by my dairy vinder afor she went to school at Littlechester—so I allus browt soom on 'em to her; and now she be gone, will ye taäke 'em, Miss Dora?

*Dora.* I thank you. They tell me that yesterday you mentioned her name too suddenly before my father. See that you do not do so again!

*Dobson.* Noä; I knaws a deäl better now. I seed how the owd man wur vext.

*Dora.* I take them, then, for Eva's sake.

[Takes basket, places some in her dress.

*Dobson.* Eva's saäke. Yeäs. Poor gel, poor gel! I can't abear to think on 'er now, fur I'd ha' done owt fur 'er mysen; an' ony o', Steer's men, an' ony o' my men 'ud ha' done owt fur 'er, an' all the parish 'ud ha' done owt fur 'er, fur we was all on us proud on 'er, an' them theer be soom of her oän roses, an' she wur as sweet as ony on 'em—the Lord

bless 'er — 'er oän sen; an' weänt ye taäke 'em now, Miss Dora, fur 'er saäke an' fur my saäke an' all?

*Dora.* Do you want them back again?

*Dobson.* Noä, noä! Keep 'em. But I hed a word to saäy to ye.

*Dora.* Why, Farmer, you should be in the hayfield looking after your men; you couldn't have more splendid weather.

*Dobson.* I be a-going theer; but I thowt I'd bring tha them roses fust. The weather's well anew, but the glass be a bit shaäky. S'iver we've led moäst on it.

*Dora.* Ay! but you must not be too sudden with it either, as you were last year, when you put it in green, and your stack caught fire.

*Dobson.* I were insured, Miss, an' I lost nowt by it. 'But I weänt be too sudden wi' it; and I feel sewer, Miss Dora, that I ha' been noän too sudden wi' you, fur I ha' sarved for ye well nigh as long as the man sarved for 'is sweet'art i' Scriptur'. Weänt ye gi'e me a kind answer at last?

*Dora.* I have no thought of marriage, my friend. We have been in such grief these five years, not only on my sister's account, but the ill success of the farm, and the debts, and my father's breaking down, and his blindness. How could I think of leaving him?

*Dobson.* Eh, but I be well to do; and if ye would nobbut hev me, I would taäke the owd blind man to my oän fire-side. You should hev him allus wi' ye.

*Dora.* You are generous, but it cannot be. I cannot love you; nay, I think I never can be brought to love any man. It seems to me that I hate men, ever since my sister left us. Oh, see here. (*Pulls out a letter.*) I wear it next my heart. Poor sister, I had it five years ago. 'Dearest Dora, — I have lost myself, and am lost for ever to you and my poor father. I thought Mr. Edgar the best of men, and he has proved himself the worst. Seek not for me, or you may find me at the bottom of the river. — EVA.'

*Dobson.* Be that my fault?

*Dora.* No; but how should I, with this grief still at my heart, take to the milking of your cows, the fattening of your

calves, the making of your butter, and the managing of your poultry?

*Dobson.* Naäy, but I hev an owd woman as 'ud see to all that; and you should sit i' your oän parlour quite like a laädy, ye should!

*Dora.* It cannot be.

*Dobson.* An' plaäy the pianner, if ye liked, all daäy long, like a laädy, ye should an' all.

*Dora.* It cannot be.

*Dobson.* And I would loove tha moor nor ony gentleman 'ud loove tha.

*Dora.* No, no; it cannot be.

*Dobson.* And p'raps ye hears 'at I soomtimes taäkes a drop too much; but that be 'all along o' you, Miss, because ye weänt hev me; but, if ye would, I could put all that o' one side eäsy anew.

*Dora.* Cannot you understand plain words, Mr. Dobson? I tell you, it cannot be.

*Dobson.* Eh lass! Thy feyther eddicated his darters to marry gentlefoälk, and see what's coomed on it.

*Dora.* That is enough, Farmer Dobson. You have shown me that, though fortune had born *you* into the estate of a gentleman, you would still have been Farmer Dobson. You had better attend to your hayfield. Good afternoon.

[*Exit.*]

*Dobson.* 'Farmer Dobson!' Well, I be Farmer Dobson; but I thinks Farmer Dobson's dog 'ud ha' know'd better nor to cast her sister's misfortin inter 'er teeth arter she'd been a-reädin' me the letter wi' 'er voice a-shaäkin', and the drop in 'er eye. Theer she goäs! Shall I foller 'er and ax 'er to maäke it up? Noä, not yet. Let 'er cool upon it; I likes 'er all the better fur taäkin' me down, like a laädy, as she be. Farmer Dobson! I be Farmer Dobson, sewer anew; but if iver I cooms upo' Gentleman Hedgar ageän, and doänt laäy my cartwhip athurt 'is shou'ders, why then I beänt Farmer Dobson, but summun else — blaäme't if I beänt!

*Enter HAYMAKERS with a load of hay.*

The last on it, eh?

*1st Haymaker.* Yeäs.

*Dobson.* Hoäm wi' it, then.

[*Exit surlily.*]

*1st Haymaker.* Well, it be the last loäd hoäm.

*2nd Haymaker.* Yeäs, an' owd Dobson should be glad on it. What maäkes 'im allus sa glum?

*Sally Ailen.* Glum! he be wuss nor glum. He coom'd up to me yisterdaäy i' the haäyfield, when meä and my sweet'art was a-working along o' one side wi' one another, and he sent 'im awaäy to t'other end o' the field; and when I axed 'im why, he telled me 'at sweet'arts niver worked well together; and I telled 'im 'at sweet'arts allus worked best together; and then he called me a rude naäme, and I can't abide 'im.

*James.* Why, lass, doänt tha know he be wuss upo' Dora Steer, and she weänt sa much as look at 'im? And wheniver 'e sees two sweet'arts together like thou and me, Sally, he be lit to bust hissen wi' spites and jealousies.

*Sally.* Let 'im bust hissen, then, for owt I cares.

*1st Haymaker.* Well but, as I said afoor, it be the last loäd hoäm; do thou and thy sweet'art sing us hoäm to supper — 'The Last Loäd Hoäm.'

*All.* Ay! 'The Last Loäd Hoäm.'

*Song.*

What did ye do, and what did ye saäy,  
Wi' the wild white rose, an' the wood-  
bine sa gaäy,

An' the midders all mow'd, an' the sky  
sa blue —

What did ye saäy, and what did ye do,  
When ye thowt there were nawbody  
watchin' o' you,

And you an' your Sally was forkin' the  
haäy,

At the end of the daäy,  
For the last loäd hoäm?

What did we do, and what did we saäy,  
Wi' the briar sa green, an' the willer sa  
graäy,

An' the midders all mow'd, an' the sky  
sa blue —

Do ye think I be gawin' to tell it to you,

What we mowt saäy, and what we mowt  
do,

When me an' my Sally was forkin' the  
haäy,

At the end of the daäy,  
For the last loäd hoäm?

But what did ye saäy, and what did ye do,  
Wi' the butterflies out, and the swallers  
at plaäy,

An' the midders all mow'd, an' the sky  
sa blue?

Why, coom then, owd feller, I'll tell it to  
you;

For me an' my Sally we sweär'd to be  
true,

To be true to each other, let 'appen what  
maäy,

Till the end of the daäy  
And the last loäd hoäm.

*All.* Well sung!

*James.* Fanny be the naäme i' the  
song, but I swopt it fur *she*.

[*Pointing to Sally.*]

*Sally.* Let ma aloän afoor foälk, wilt  
tha?

*1st Haymaker.* Ye shall sing that  
ageän to-night, fur owd Dobson'll gi'e us  
a bit o' supper.

*Sally.* I weänt goä to owd Dobson;  
he wur rude to me i' tha haäyfield, and  
he'll be rude to me ageän to-night. Owd  
Steer's gotten all his grass down and  
wants a hand, and I'll goä to him.

*1st Haymaker.* Owd Steer gi'es nub-  
but cowl tea to 'is men, and owd Dob-  
son gi'es beer.

*Sally.* But I'd like owd Steer's cowl  
tea better nor Dobson's beer. Good-bye.

[*Going.*]

*James.* Gi'e us a buss fust, lass.

*Sally.* I telled tha to let ma aloän!

*James.* Why, wasn't thou and me  
a-bussin' o' one another t'other side o'  
the haäycock, when owd Dobson coom'd  
upo' us? I can't let tha aloän if I  
would, Sally.

[*Offering to kiss her.*]

*Sally.* Git along wi' ye, do!

[*Exit.*  
[*All laugh; exeunt singing.*]

'To be true to each other, let 'appen  
what maäy,



Till the end o' the daäy  
An' the last löäd hoäm.'

*Enter HAROLD.*

*Harold.* Not Harold! 'Philip Edgar,  
Philip Edgar!'

Her phantom call'd me by the name she  
loved.

I told her I should hear her from the  
grave.

Ay! yonder is her casement. I re-  
member

Her bright face beaming starlike down  
upon me

Thro' that rich cloud of blossom. Since  
I left her

Here weeping, I have ranged the world,  
and sat

Thro' every sensual course of that full  
feast

That leaves but emptiness.

*Song.*

'To be true to each other, let 'appen  
what maäy,  
To the end o' the daäy  
An' the last löäd hoäm.'

*Harold.* Poor Eva! O my God, if  
man be only

A willy-nilly current of sensations—  
Reaction needs must follow revel—yet—  
Why feel remorse, he, knowing that he  
*must* have

Moved in the iron grooves of Destiny?

Remorse then is a part of Destiny,

Nature a liar, making us feel guilty

Of her own faults.

My grandfather—of him  
They say, that women—

O this mortal house,  
Which we are born into, is haunted by  
The ghosts of the dead passions of dead  
men;

And these take flesh again with our own  
flesh,

And bring us to confusion.

He was only  
A poor philosopher who call'd the mind  
Of children a blank page, a *tabula rasa*.  
There, there, is written in invisible inks  
'Lust, Prodigality, Covetousness, Craft,

Cowardice, Murder'—and the heat and  
fire

Of life will bring them out, and black  
enough,

So the child grow to manhood: better  
death

With our first wail than life—

*Song (further off).*

'Till the end o' the daäy  
An' the last löäd hoäm,  
Löäd hoäm.'

This bridge again! (*Steps on the bridge.*)

How often have I stood  
With Eva here! The brook among its  
flowers!

Forget-me-not, meadowsweet, willow-  
herb.

I had some smattering of science then,  
Taught her the learned names, anatomised

The flowers for her—and now I only wish  
This pool were deep enough, that I

might plunge  
And lose myself for ever.

*Enter DAN SMITH (singing).*

Gee oop! whoä! Gee oop! whoä!  
Scizzars an' Pumpy was good uns to goä

Thruf slush an' squad  
When röäds was bad,

But hallus 'ud stop at the Vine-an'-the-  
Hop,

Fur boäth on 'em knawed as well as  
mysen

That beer be as good fur 'erses as  
men.

Gee oop! whoä! Gee oop! whoä!  
Scizzars an' Pumpy was good uns to  
goä.

The beer's gotten oop into my 'eäd.  
S'iver I mun git along back to the farm,  
fur she telled ma to taäke the cart to  
Littlechester.

*Enter DORA.*

Half an hour late! why are you loiter-  
ing here? Away with you at once.

[*Exit Dan Smith.*  
(*Seeing Harold on bridge.*)

Some madman, is it,

Gesticulating there upon the bridge?  
I am half afraid to pass.

*Harold.* Sometimes I wonder,  
When man has surely learnt at last that  
all

His old-world faith, the blossom of his  
youth,

Has faded, falling fruitless — whether then  
All of us, all at once, may not be seized  
With some fierce passion, not so much  
for Death

As against Life! all, all, into the dark —  
No more! — and science now could drug  
and balm us

Back into nescience with as little pain  
As it is to fall asleep.

This beggarly life,  
This poor, flat, hedged-in field — no distance — this

Hollow Pandora-box,  
With all the pleasures flown, not even  
Hope

Left at the bottom!

Superstitious fool,  
What brought me here? To see her  
grave? her ghost?

Her ghost is everyway about me here.

*Dora (coming forward).* Allow me,  
sir, to pass you.

*Harold.* Eva!

*Dora.* Eva!

*Harold.* What are you? Where do  
you come from?

*Dora.* From the farm  
Here, close at hand.

*Harold.* Are you — you are — that  
Dora,

The sister. I have heard of you. The  
likeness

Is very striking.

*Dora.* You knew Eva, then?

*Harold.* Yes — I was thinking of her  
when — Oh yes,

Many years back, and never since have  
met

Her equal for pure innocence of nature,  
And loveliness of feature.

*Dora.* No, nor I.

*Harold.* Except, indeed, I have found  
it once again

In your own self.

*Dora.* You flatter me. Dear Eva  
Was always thought the prettier.

*Harold.* And her charm  
Of voice is also yours; and I was brood-  
ing

Upon a great unhappiness when you  
spoke.

*Dora.* Indeed, you seem'd in trouble,  
sir.

*Harold.* And you  
Seem my good angel who may help me  
from it.

*Dora (Aside).* How worn he looks,  
poor man! who is it, I wonder.

How can I help him? (*Aloud.*) Might  
I ask your name?

*Harold.* Harold.

*Dora.* I never heard her mention you.

*Harold.* I met her first at a farm in  
Cumberland —

Her uncle's.

*Dora.* She was there six years ago.

*Harold.* And if she never mention'd  
me, perhaps

The painful circumstances which I  
heard —

I will not vex you by repeating them —  
Only last week at Littlechester, drove me

From out her memory. She has dis-  
appear'd,

They told me, from the farm — and  
darker news.

*Dora.* She has disappear'd, poor  
darling, from the world —

Left but one dreadful line to say, that we  
Should find her in the river; and we

dragg'd

The Littlechester river all in vain:

Have sorrow'd for her all these years in  
vain.

And my poor father, utterly broken down  
By losing her — she was his favourite

child —

Has let his farm, all his affairs, I fear,  
But for the slender help that I can give,

Fall into ruin. Ah! that villain, Edgar,  
If he should ever show his face among us,

Our men and boys would hoot him, stone  
him, hunt him

With pitchforks off the farm, for all of  
them

Loved her, and she was worthy of all  
love.

*Harold.* They say, we should forgive  
our enemies.

*Dora.* Ay, if the wretch were dead I might forgive him;  
We know not whether he be dead or living.

*Harold.* What Edgar?

*Dora.* Philip Edgar of Toft Hall in Somerset. Perhaps you know him?

*Harold.* Slightly.  
(*Aside.*) Ay, for how slightly have I known myself.

*Dora.* This Edgar, then, is living?

*Harold.* Living? well—  
One Philip Edgar of Toft Hall in Somerset

Is lately dead.

*Dora.* Dead!—is there more than one?

*Harold.* Nay—now—not one, (*aside*)  
for I am Philip Harold.

*Dora.* That one, is he then—dead!

*Harold.* (*Aside.*) My father's death,  
Let her believe it mine; this, for the moment,

Will leave me a free field.

*Dora.* Dead! and this world  
Is brighter for his absence as that other  
Is darker for his presence.

*Harold.* Is not this  
To speak too pitilessly of the dead?

*Dora.* My five-years' anger cannot  
die at once,

Not all at once with death and him. I  
trust

I shall forgive him—by-and-by—not  
now.

O sir, you seem to have a heart; if you  
Had seen us that wild morning when we  
found

Her bed unslept in, storm and shower  
lashing

Her casement, her poor spaniel wailing  
for her,

That desolate letter, blotted with her  
tears,

Which told us we should never see her  
more—

Our old nurse crying as if for her own  
child,

My father stricken with his first paralysis,  
And then with blindness—had you been  
one of us

And seen all this, then you would know  
it is not

So easy to forgive—even the dead.

*Harold.* But sure am I that of your  
gentleness

You will forgive him. She, you mourn  
for, seen'd

A miracle of gentleness—would not blur  
A moth's wing by the touching; would  
not crush

The fly that drew her blood; and, were  
she living,

Would not—if penitent—have denied  
him *her*

Forgiveness. And perhaps the man  
himself,

When hearing of that piteous death, has  
suffer'd

More than we know. But wherefore  
waste your heart

In looking on a chill and changeless Past?  
Iron will fuse, and marble melt; the Past  
Remains the Past. But you are young,  
and—pardon me—

As lovely as your sister. Who can tell  
What golden hours, with what full hands,  
may be

Waiting you in the distance? Might I  
call

Upon your father—I have seen the  
world—

And cheer his blindness with a traveller's  
tales?

*Dora.* Call if you will, and when you  
will. I cannot

Well answer for my father; but if you  
Can tell me anything of our sweet Eva  
When in her brighter girlhood, I at least  
Will bid you welcome, and will listen to  
you.

Now I must go.

*Harold.* But give me first your hand:  
I do not dare, like an old friend, to  
shake it.

I kiss it as a prelude to that privilege  
When you shall know me better.

*Dora.* (*Aside.*) How beautiful  
His manners are, and how unlike the  
farmer's!

You are staying here?

*Harold.* Yes, at the wayside inn  
Close by that alder-island in your brook,  
'The Angler's Home.'

*Dora.* Are you one?

*Harold.* No, but I

Take some delight in sketching, and the country

Has many charms, altho' the inhabitants seem semi-barbarous.

*Dora.* I am glad it pleases you; Yet I, born here, not only love the country,

But its inhabitants too; and you, I doubt not,

Would take to them as kindly, if you cared

To live some time among them.

*Harold.* If I did, Then one at least of its inhabitants

Might have more charm for me than all the country.

*Dora.* That one, then, should be grateful for your preference.

*Harold.* I cannot tell, tho' standing in her presence.

(*Aside.*) She colours!

*Dora.* Sir!

*Harold.* Be not afraid of me, For these are no conventional flourishes. I do most earnestly assure you that Your likeness —

[*Shouts and cries without.*]

*Dora.* What was that? my poor blind father —

*Enter FARMING MAN.*

*Farming Man.* Miss Dora, Dan Smith's cart hes runned ower a laädy i' the holler laäne, and they ha' ta'en the body up inter your chaumber, and they be all a-callin' for ye.

*Dora.* The body! — Heavens! I come!

*Harold.* But you are trembling. Allow me to go with you to the farm.

[*Exeunt.*]

*Enter DOBSON.*

*Dobson.* What feller wur it as 'a' been a-talkin' fur haäfe an hour wi' my Dora? (*Looking after him.*) Seeäms I ommost knaws the back on 'im — drest like a gentleman, too. Damn all gentlemen, says I! I should ha' thowt they'd hed anew o' gentlefoäk, as I telled 'er to-daäy when she fell foul upo' me.

Minds ma o' summun. I could sweär to that; but that be all one, fur I haätes 'im afoor I knaws what 'e be. Their!

he turns round. Philip Hedgar o' Soomerset! Philip Hedgar o' Soomerset! — Noä — yeäs — thaw the feller's gone and maäde such a litter of his faäce. Eh lad, if it be thou, I'll Philip tha! a-plaäyin' the saäme gaäme wi' my Dora — I'll Soomerset tha.

I'd like to drag 'im thruf the herse-pond, and she to be a-lookin' at it. I'd like to leather 'im black and blue, and she to be a-laughin' at it. I'd like to fell 'im as deäd as a bullock! (*Clenching his fist.*)

But what 'ud she saäy to that? She telled me once not to meddle wi' 'im, and now she be fallen out wi' ma, and I can't coom at 'er.

It mun be *him*. Noä! Fur she'd niver 'a' been talkin' haäfe an hour wi' the divil 'at killed her oän sister, or she beänt Dora Steer.

Yeäs! Fur she niver knawed 'is faäce when 'e wur 'ere afoor; but I'll maäke 'er knaw! I'll maäke 'er knaw!

*Enter HAROLD.*

Nääy, but I mun git out on 'is waäy now, or I shall be the death on 'im.

[*Exit.*]

*Harold.* How the clown glared at me! that Dobbins, is it,

With whom I used to jar? but can he trace me

Thro' five years' absence, and my change of name,

The tan of southern summers and the beard?

I may as well avoid him.

Ladylike!

Lilylike in her stateliness and sweetness! How came she by it? — a daughter of the fields,

This Dora!

She gave her hand, unask'd, at the farm gate;

I almost think she half return'd the pressure

Of mine. What, I that held the orange blossom

Dark as the yew? but may not those, who march

Before their age, turn back at times, and make

Courtesy to custom? and now the  
stronger motive,  
Misnamed free-will—the crowd would  
call it conscience—  
Moves me—to what? I am dreaming;  
for the past  
Look'd thro' the present, Eva's eyes  
thro' hers—  
A spell upon me! Surely I loved Eva  
More than I knew! or is it but the past  
That brightens in retiring? Oh, last  
night,  
Tired, pacing my new lands at Little-  
chester,  
I dozed upon the bridge, and the black  
river  
Flow'd thro' my dreams—if dreams they  
were. She rose  
From the foul flood and pointed toward  
the farm,  
And her cry rang to me across the years,  
'I call you, Philip Edgar, Philip Edgar!  
Come, you will set all right again, and  
father  
Will not die miserable.' I could make  
his age  
A comfort to him—so be more at peace  
With mine own self. Some of my former  
friends  
Would find my logic faulty; let them.  
Colour  
Flows thro' my life again, and I have  
lighted  
On a new pleasure. Anyhow we must  
Move in the line of least resistance when  
The stronger motive rules.

But she hates Edgar.

May not this Dobbins, or some other, spy  
Edgar in Harold? Well then, I must  
make her  
Love Harold first, and then she will for-  
give  
Edgar for Harold's sake. She said her-  
self  
She would forgive him, by-and-by, not  
now—  
For her own sake *then*, if not for mine—  
not now—  
But by-and-by.

*Enter DOBSON behind.*

*Dobson.* By-and-by—eh, lad, dosta  
know this paäper? Ye dropt it upo' the

road. 'Philip Edgar, Esq.' Ay, you be  
a pretty squire. I ha' fun' ye out, I hev.  
Eh, lad, dosta know what tha meäns wi'  
by-and-by? Fur if ye be goin' to sarve  
our Dora as ye sarved our Eva—then,  
by-and-by, if she weänt listen to me when  
I be a-tryin' to saäve 'er—if she weänt  
—look to thysen, for, by the Lord, I'd  
think na moor o' maäkin' an end o' tha  
nor a carrion crow—noä—thaw they  
hanged ma at 'Sive fur it.

*Harold.* Dobbins, I think!

*Dobson.* I beänt Dobbins.

*Harold.* Nor am I Edgar, my good  
fellow.

*Dobson.* Tha lies! What basta been  
saäyin' to my Dora?

*Harold.* I have been telling her of  
the death of one Philip Edgar of Toft  
Hall, Somerset.

*Dobson.* Tha lies!

*Harold* (*pulling out a newspaper*).  
Well, my man, it seems that you can  
read. Look there—under the deaths.

*Dobson.* 'O the 17th, Philip Edgar,  
o' Toft Hall, Soomerset.' How coom  
thou to be sa like 'im, then?

*Harold.* Naturally enough; for I am  
closely related to the dead man's family.

*Dobson.* An' 'ow coom thou by the  
letter to 'im?

*Harold.* Naturally again; for as I  
used to transact all his business for him,  
I had to look over his letters. Now  
then, see these (*takes out letters*). Half  
a score of them, all directed to me—  
Harold.

*Dobson.* 'Arold! 'Arold! 'Arold, so  
they be.

*Harold.* My name is Harold! Good  
day, Dobbins! [*Exit.*]

*Dobson.* 'Arold! The feller's cleän  
daäzed, an' maäzed, an' maäted, an' mud-  
dled ma. Deäd! It mun be true, fur it  
wur i' print as black as ow. Naäy, but  
'Good daäy, Dobbins.' Why, that wur  
the very twang on 'im. Eh, lad, but  
whether thou be Hedgar, or Hedgar's  
business man, thou hesn't naw business  
'ere wi' my Dora, as I knaws on, an'  
whether thou calls thysen Hedgar or  
Harold, if thou stick to she I'll stick to  
thee—stick to tha like a weasel to a

rabbit, I will. Ay! and I'd like to shoot tha like a rabbit an' all. 'Good daäy, Dobbins.' Dang tha!

## ACT III.

SCENE. — A ROOM IN STEER'S HOUSE.

DOOR LEADING INTO BEDROOM AT THE BACK.

*Dora (ringing a handbell).* Milly!

*Enter MILLY.*

*Milly.* The little 'ymn? Yeäs, Miss; but I wur so ta'en up wi' leädin' the owd man about all the blessed murnin' 'at I ha' nobbut larned mysen haäfe on it.

'O man, forgive thy mortal foe,  
Nor ever strike him blow for blow;  
For all the souls on earth that live  
To be forgiven must forgive.  
Forgive him seventy times and seven;  
For all the blessed souls in Heaven  
Are both forgivers and forgiven.'

But I'll git the book ageän, and larn mysen the rest, and saäy it to ye afoor dark; ye ringed fur that, Miss, didn't ye?

*Dora.* No, Milly; but if the farming men be come for their wages, to send them up to me.

*Milly.* Yeäs, Miss. *[Exit.]*

*Dora (sitting at desk counting money).* Enough at any rate for the present. *(Enter Farming Men.)* Good afternoon, my friends. I am sorry Mr. Steer still continues too unwell to attend to you, but the schoolmaster looked to the paying you your wages when I was away, didn't he?

*Men.* Yeäs; and thanks to ye.

*Dora.* Some of our workmen have left us, but he sent me an alphabetical list of those that remain, so, Allen, I may as well begin with you.

*Allen (with his hand to his ear).* Halfabitical! Taäke one o' the young 'uns fust, Miss, fur I be a bit deaf, and I wur hallus scaäred by a big word; leäst-waäys, I should be wi' a lawyer.

*Dora.* I spoke of your names, Allen, as they are arranged here *(shows book)* — according to their first letters.

*Allen.* Letters! Yeäs, I sees now. Them be what they larns the childer' at school, but I were burn afoor schoolin-time.

*Dora.* But, Allen, tho' you can't read, you could whitewash that cottage of yours where your grandson had the fever.

*Allen.* I'll hev it done o' Monday.

*Dora.* Else if the fever spread, the parish will have to thank you for it.

*Allen.* Meä? why, it be the Lord's doin', noän o' mine; d'ye think I'd gi'e 'em the fever? But I thanks ye all the saäme, Miss. *(Takes money.)*

*Dora (calling out names).* Higgins, Jackson, Luscombe, Nokes, Oldham, Skipworth! *(All take money.)* Did you find that you worked at all the worse upon the cold tea than you would have done upon the beer?

*Higgins.* Noä, Miss; we worked naw wuss upo' the cowl tea; but we'd ha' work'd better upo' the beer.

*Dora.* Come, come, you worked well enough, and I am much obliged to all of you. There's for you, and you, and you. Count the money and see if it's all right.

*Men.* All right, Miss; and thank ye kindly.

*[Exeunt Luscombe, Nokes, Oldham, Skipworth.]*

*Dora.* Dan Smith, my father and I forgave you stealing our coals.

*[Dan Smith advances to Dora.]*

*Dan Smith (bellowing).* Whoy, O lor, Miss! that wur sa long back, and the walls sa thin, and the winders broken, and the weather sa cowl, and my missus a-gittin' ower 'er lvin'-in.

*Dora.* Didn't I say that we had forgiven you? But, Dan Smith, they tell me that you — and you have six children — spent all your last Saturday's wages at the ale-house; that you were stupid drunk all Sunday, and so ill in consequence all Monday that you did not come into the hayfield. Why should I pay you your full wages?

*-Dan Smith.* I be ready to taäke the pledge.

*Dora.* And as ready to break it again. Besides it was you that were driving the



cart—and I fear you were tipsy then, too—when you lamed the lady in the hollow lane.

*Dan Smith (bellowing).* O lor, Miss! noä, noä, noä! Ye sees the holler laäne be hallus sa dark i' the arternoon, and where the big eshtree cuts athurt it, it gi'es a turn like, and 'ow should I see to laäme the laädy, and meä coomin' along pretty sharp an' all?

*Dora.* Well, there are your wages; the next time you waste them at a pot-house you get no more from me. (*Exit Dan Smith.*) Sally Allen, you worked for Mr. Dobson, didn't you?

*Sally (advancing).* Yeäs, Miss; but he wur so rough wi' ma, I couldn't abide 'im.

*Dora.* Why should he be rough with you? You are as good as a man in the hayfield. What's become of your brother?

*Sally.* 'Listed for a soädger, Miss, i' the Queen's Real Hard Tillery.

*Dora.* And your sweetheart—when are you and he to be married?

*Sally.* At Michaelmas, Miss, please God.

*Dora.* You are an honest pair. I will come to your wedding.

*Sally.* An' I thanks ye fur that, Miss, moor nor fur the waäge.

(*Going—returns.*) 'A cotched ma about the waäist, Miss, when 'e wur 'ere afoor, an' axed ma to be 'is little sweet-art, an' 'soä I know'd 'im when I seed 'im ageän an' I telled feyther on 'im.

*Dora.* What is all this, Allen?

*Allen.* Why, Miss Dora, meä and my maätes, us three, we wants to hev three words wi' ye.

*Higgins.* That be 'im, and meä, Miss.

*Jackson.* An' meä, Miss.

*Allen.* An' we weänt mention naw naämes, we'd as lief talk o' the Divil afoor ye as 'im, fur they says the master goäs cleän off his 'eäd when he 'eärs the naäme on 'im; but us three, arter Sally'd telled us on 'im, we fun' 'im out a-walkin' i' West Field wi' a white 'at, nine o'clock, upo' Tuesday murnin', and all on us, wi' your leave, we wants to leather 'im.

*Dora.* Who?

*Allen.* Him as did the mischief here, five year sin'.

*Dora.* Mr. Edgar?

*Allen.* Theer, Miss! You ha' naämed 'im—not me.

*Dora.* He's dead, man—dead; gone to his account—dead and buried.

*Allen.* I beänt sa sewer o' that, fur Sally know'd 'im. Now then?

*Dora.* Yes; it was in the Somersetshire papers.

*Allen.* Then you mun be his brother, an' we'll leather 'im.

*Dora.* I never heard that he had a brother. Some foolish mistake of Sally's; but what! would you beat a man for his brother's fault? That were a wild justice indeed. Let bygones be bygones. Go home! Good-night! (*All exeunt.*) I have once more paid them all. The work of the farm will go on still, but for how long? We are almost at the bottom of the well: little more to be drawn from it—and what then? Encumbered as we are, who would lend us anything? We shall have to sell all the land, which Father, for a whole life, has been getting together, again, and that, I am sure, would be the death of him. What am I to do? Farmer Dobson, were I to marry him, has promised to keep our heads above water; and the man has doubtless a good heart, and a true and lasting love for me: yet—though I can be sorry for him—as the good Sally says, 'I can't abide him'—almost brutal, and matched with my Harold is like a hedge thistle by a garden rose. But then, he, too—will he ever be of one faith with his wife? which is my dream of a true marriage. Can I fancy him kneeling with me, and uttering the same prayer; standing up side by side with me, and singing the same hymn? I fear not. Have I done wisely, then, in accepting him? But may not a girl's love-dream have too much romance in it to be realised all at once, or altogether, or anywhere but in Heaven? And yet I had once a vision of a pure and perfect marriage, where the man and the woman, only differing as the stronger and the weaker, should walk hand in hand to-

gether down this valley of tears, as they call it so truly, to the grave at the bottom, and lie down there together in the darkness which would seem but for a moment, to be wakened again together by the light of the resurrection, and no more partings for ever and for ever. (*Walks up and down. She sings.*)

'O happy lark, that warblest high  
Above thy lowly nest,  
O brook, that brawlest merrily by  
Thro' fields that once were blest,  
O tower springing to the sky,  
O graves in daisies drest,  
O Love and Life, how weary am I,  
And how I long for rest.'

There, there, I am a fool! Tears! I have sometimes been moved to tears by a chapter of fine writing in a novel; but what have I to do with tears now? All depends on me — Father, this poor girl, the farm, everything; and they both love me — I am all in all to both; and he loves me too, I am quite sure of that. Courage, courage! and all will go well. (*Goes to bedroom door; opens it.*) How dark your room is! Let me bring you in here where there is still full daylight. (*Brings Eva forward.*) Why, you look better.

*Eva.* And I feel so much better, that I trust I may be able by-and-by to help you in the business of the farm; but I must not be known yet. Has anyone found me out, Dora?

*Dora.* Oh, no; you kept your veil too close for that when they carried you in; since then, no one has seen you but myself.

*Eva.* Yes — this Milly.

*Dora.* Poor blind Father's little guide, Milly, who came to us three years after you were gone, how should she know you? But now that you have been brought to us as it were from the grave, dearest Eva, and have been here so long, will you not speak with Father to-day?

*Eva.* Do you think that I may? No, not yet. I am not equal to it yet.

*Dora.* Why? Do you still suffer from your fall in the hollow lane?

*Eva.* Bruised; but no bones broken.

*Dora.* I have always told Father that the huge old ash-tree there would cause an accident some day; but he would never cut it down, because one of the Steers had planted it there in former times.

*Eva.* If it had killed one of the Steers there the other day, it might have been better for her, for him, and for you.

*Dora.* Come, come, keep a good heart! Better for me! That's good. How better for me?

*Eva.* You tell me you have a lover. Will he not fly from you if he learn the story of my shame and that I am still living?

*Dora.* No; I am sure that when we are married he will be willing that you and Father should live with us; for, indeed, he tells me that he met you once in the old times, and was much taken with you, my dear.

*Eva.* Taken with me; who was he? Have you told him I am here?

*Dora.* No; do you wish it?

*Eva.* See, Dora; you yourself are ashamed of me (*weeps*), and I do not wonder at it.

*Dora.* But I should wonder at myself if it were so. Have we not been all in all to one another from the time when we first peeped into the bird's nest, waded in the brook, ran after the butterflies, and prattled to each other that we would marry fine gentlemen, and played at being fine ladies?

*Eva.* That last was my Father's fault, poor man. And this lover of yours — this Mr. Harold — is a gentleman?

*Dora.* That he is, from head to foot. I do believe I lost my heart to him the very first time we met, and I love him so much —

*Eva.* Poor Dora!

*Dora.* That I dare not tell him how much I love him.

*Eva.* Better not. Has he offered you marriage, this gentleman?

*Dora.* Could I love him else?

*Eva.* And are you quite sure that after marriage this gentleman will not be shamed of his poor farmer's daughter among the ladies in his drawing-room?

*Dora.* Shamed of me in a drawing-room! Wasn't Miss Vavasour, our schoolmistress at Littlechester, a lady born? Were not our fellow-pupils all ladies? Wasn't dear mother herself at least by one side a lady? Can't I speak like a lady; pen a letter like a lady; talk a little French like a lady; play a little like a lady? Can't a girl when she loves her husband, and he her, make herself anything he wishes her to be? Shamed of me in a drawing-room, indeed! See here! 'I hope your Lordship is quite recovered of your gout?' (*Curtseys.*) 'Will your Ladyship ride to cover to-day?' (*Curtseys.*) I can recommend our Voltigeur.' 'I am sorry that we could not attend your Grace's party on the 10th!' (*Curtseys.*) There, I am glad my nonsense has made you smile!

*Eva.* I have heard that 'your Lordship,' and 'your Ladyship,' and 'your Grace' are all growing old-fashioned!

*Dora.* But the love of sister for sister can never be old-fashioned. I have been unwilling to trouble you with questions, but you seem somewhat better to-day. We found a letter in your bedroom torn into bits. I couldn't make it out. What was it?

*Eva.* From him! from him! He said we had been most happy together, and he trusted that sometime we should meet again, for he had not forgotten his promise to come when I called him. But that was a mockery, you know, for he gave me no address, and there was no word of marriage; and, O Dora, he signed himself 'Yours gratefully'—fancy, Dora, 'gratefully'! 'Yours gratefully'!

*Dora.* Infamous wretch! (*Aside.*) Shall I tell her he is dead? No; she is still too feeble.

*Eva.* Hark! Dora, some one is coming. I cannot and I will not see anybody.

*Dora.* It is only Milly.

*Enter MILLY with basket of roses.*

*Dora.* Well, Milly, why do you come in so roughly? The sick lady here might have been asleep.

*Milly.* Please, Miss, Mr. Dobson

telled me to sañy he's browt some of Miss Eva's roses for the sick laädy to smell on.

*Dora.* Take them, dear. Say that the sick lady thanks him! Is he here?

*Milly.* Yeäs, Miss; and he wants to speak to ye partic'lar.

*Dora.* Tell him I cannot leave the sick lady just yet.

*Milly.* Yeäs, Miss; but he says he wants to tell ye summut very partic'lar.

*Dora.* Not to-day. What are you staying for?

*Milly.* Why, Miss, I be afeard I shall set him a-sweäring like onythink.

*Dora.* And what harm will that do you, so that you do not copy his bad manners? Go, child. (*Exit Milly.*) But, Eva, why did you write, 'Seek me at the bottom of the river'?

*Eva.* Why? because I meant it!—that dreadful night! that lonely walk to Littlechester, the rain beating in my face all the way, dead midnight when I came upon the bridge; the river, black, slimy, swirling under me in the lamplight, by the rotten wharfs—but I was so mad, that I mounted upon the parapet—

*Dora.* You make me shudder!

*Eva.* To fling myself over, when I heard a voice, 'Girl, what are you doing there?' It was a Sister of Mercy, come from the death-bed of a pauper, who had died in his misery blessing God, and the Sister took me to her house, and bit by bit—for she promised secrecy—I told her all.

*Dora.* And what then?

*Eva.* She would have persuaded me to come back here, but I couldn't. Then she got me a place as nursery governess, and when the children grew too old for me, and I asked her once more to help me, once more she said, 'Go home;' but I hadn't the heart or face to do it. And then—what would Father say? I sank so low that I went into service—the drudge of a lodging-house—and when the mistress died, and I appealed to the Sister again, her answer—I think I have it about me—yes, there it is!

*Dora (reads).* 'My dear Child,—I can do no more for you. I have done

wrong in keeping your secret; your Father must be now in extreme old age. Go back to him and ask his forgiveness before he dies. — SISTER AGATHA.' Sister Agatha is right. Don't you long for Father's forgiveness?

*Eva.* I would almost die to have it!

*Dora.* And he may die before he gives it; may drop off any day, any hour. You must see him at once. (*Rings bell.* Enter Milly.) Milly, my dear, how did you leave Mr. Steer?

*Milly.* He's been a-moänin' and a-groänin' in 'is sleep, but I thinks he be wakenin' oop.

*Dora.* Tell him that I and the lady here wish to see him. You see she is lamed, and cannot go down to him.

*Milly.* Yeäs, Miss, I will.

[*Exit Milly.*]

*Dora.* I ought to prepare you. You must not expect to find our Father as he was five years ago. He is much altered; but I trust that your return — for you know, my dear, you were always his favourite — will give him, as they say, a new lease of life.

*Eva (clinging to Dora).* Oh, Dora, Dora!

[*Enter STEER led by MILLY.*]

*Steer.* Has the cow cawved?

*Dora.* No, Father.

*Steer.* Be the colt deääd?

*Dora.* No, father.

*Steer.* He wur sa bellows'd out wi' the wind this murnin', 'at I telled 'em to gallop 'im. Be he deääd?

*Dora.* Not that I know.

*Steer.* What hasta sent fur me, then, fur?

*Dora (taking Steer's arm).* Well, Father, I have a surprise for you.

*Steer.* I ha' niver been surprised but once i' my life, and I went blind upon it.

*Dora.* Eva has come home.

*Steer.* Hoäm? fro' the bottom o' the river?

*Dora.* No, Father, that was a mistake. She's here again.

*Steer.* The Steers were all gentlefoälks i' the owd times, an' I worked early an' laäte to maäke 'em all gentlefoälks ageän.

The land belonged to the Steers i' the owd times, an' it belongs to the Stëers ageän: I bowt it back ageän; but I couldn't buy mj darter back ageän when she lost hersen, could I? I eddicated boäth on 'em to marry gentlemen, an' one on 'em went an' lost hersen i' the river.

*Dora.* No, Father, she's here.

*Steer.* Here! she moänt coom here. What would her mother saäy? If it be her ghoäst, we mun abide it. We can't keep a ghoäst out.

*Eva (falling at his feet).* Oh, forgive me! forgive me!

*Steer.* Who said that? Taäke me awaäy, little gell. It be one o' my bad daäys. [*Exit Steer led by Milly.*]

*Dora (smoothing Eva's forehead).* Be not so cast down, my sweet Eva. You heard him say it was one of his bad days. He will be sure to know you to-morrow.

*Eva.* It is almost the last of my bad days, I think. I am very faint. I must lie down. Give me your arm. Lead me back again.

[*Dora takes Eva into inner room.*]

[*Enter MILLY.*]

*Milly.* Miss Dora! Miss Dora!

*Dora (returning and leaving the bedroom door ajar).* Quiet! quiet! What is it?

*Milly.* Mr. 'Arold, Miss.

*Dora.* Below?

*Milly.* Yeäs, Miss. He be saäyin' a word to the owd man, but he'll coom up if ye lets 'im.

*Dora.* Tell him, then, that I'm waiting for him.

*Milly.* Yeäs, Miss.

[*Exit. Dora sits pensively and waits.*]

[*Enter HAROLD.*]

*Harold.* You are pale, my Dora! but the ruddiest cheek  
That ever charm'd the plowman of your wolds  
Might wish its rose a lily, could it look  
But half as lovely. I was speaking with  
Your father, asking his consent — you wish'd me —

That we should marry: he would answer  
nothing,

I could make nothing of him; but, my  
flower,

You look so weary and so worn! What  
is it

Has put you out of heart?

*Dora.* It puts me in heart  
Again to see you; but indeed the state  
Of my poor father puts me out of heart.  
Is yours yet living?

*Harold.* No — I told you.

*Dora.* When?

*Harold.* Confusion! — Ah well, well!  
the state we all

Must come to in our spring-and-winter  
world

If we live long enough! and poor Steer  
looks

The very type of Age in a picture, bow'd  
To the earth he came from, to the grave  
he goes to,

Beneath the burthen of years.

*Dora.* More like the picture  
Of Christian in my 'Pilgrim's Progress'  
here,

Bow'd to the dust beneath the burthen  
of sin.

*Harold.* Sin! What sin?

*Dora.* Not his own.

*Harold.* That nursery-tale

Still read, then?

*Dora.* Yes; our carters and  
our shepherds

Still find a comfort there.

*Harold.* Carters and shepherds!

*Dora.* Scorn! I hate scorn. A  
soul with no religion —

My mother used to say that such a one  
Was without rudder, anchor, compass —  
might be

Blown everyway with every gust and  
wreck

On any rock; and tho' you are good and  
gentle,

Yet if thro' any want —

*Harold.* Of this religion?

Child, read a little history, you will find  
The common brotherhood of man has  
been

Wrong'd by the cruelties of his religions  
More than could ever have happen'd thro'  
the want

Of any or all of them.

*Dora.* — But, O dear friend,  
If thro' the want of any — I mean the true  
one —

And pardon me for saying it — you should  
ever

Be tempted into doing what might seem  
Not altogether worthy of you, I think  
That I should break my heart, for you  
have taught me

To love you.

*Harold.* What is this? some one been  
stirring

Against me? he, your rustic amourist,  
The polish'd Damon of your pastoral here,  
This Dobson of your idyll?

*Dora.* No, Sir, no!  
Did you not tell me he was crazed with  
jealousy,

Had threaten'd ev'n your life, and would  
say anything?

Did I not promise not to listen to him,  
Nor ev'n to see the man?

*Harold.* Good; then what is it  
That makes you talk so dolefully?

*Dora.* I told you —  
My father. Well, indeed, a friend just  
now,

One that has been much wrong'd, whose  
griefs are mine,

Was warning me that if a gentleman  
Should wed a farmer's daughter, he  
would be

Sooner or later shamed of her among

The ladies, born his equals.

*Harold.* More fool he!  
What I that have been call'd a Socialist,  
A Communist, a Nihilist — what you  
will! —

*Dora.* What are all these?

*Harold.* Utopian idiotcies.  
They did not last three Junes. Such  
rampant weeds

Strangle each other, die, and make the  
soil

For Cæsars, Cromwells, and Napoleons  
To root their power in. I have freed  
myself

From all such dreams, and some will say  
because

I have inherited my Uncle. Let them.

But — shamed of you, my Empress! I  
should prize

The pearl of Beauty, even if I found it  
Dark with the soot of slums.

*Dora.* But I can tell you.  
We Steers are of old blood, tho' we be  
fallen.

See there our shield. (*Pointing to arms  
on mantelpiece.*)

For I have heard the Steers  
Had land in Saxon times; and your own  
name

Of Harold sounds so English and so old  
I am sure you must be proud of it.

*Harold.* Not I!  
As yet I scarcely feel it mine. I took it  
For some three thousand acres. I have  
land now

And wealth, and lay both at your feet.

*Dora.* And *what* was  
Your name before?

*Harold.* Come, come, my girl, enough  
Of this strange talk. I love you and you  
me.

True, I have held opinions, hold some still,  
Which you would scarce approve of: for  
all that,

I am a man not prone to jealousies,  
Caprices, humours, moods; but very  
ready

To make allowances, and mighty slow  
To feel offences. Nay, I do believe  
I could forgive — well, almost anything —  
And that more freely than your formal  
priest,

Because I know more fully than *he* can  
What poor earthworms are all and each  
of us,

Here crawling in this boundless Nature.

*Dora.*  
If marriage ever brought a woman happi-  
ness

I doubt not I can make you happy.

*Dora.* You make me  
Happy already.

*Harold.* And I never said  
As much before to any woman living.

*Dora.* No?

*Harold.* No! by this true kiss, *you*  
are the first

I ever have loved truly.

[*They kiss each other.*

*Eva (with a wild cry).* Philip Edgar!

*Harold.* The phantom cry! *You* —  
did *you* hear a cry?

*Dora.* She must be crying out 'Edgar'  
in her sleep.

*Harold.* Who must be crying out  
'Edgar' in her sleep?

*Dora.* Your pardon for a minute.  
She must be waked.

*Harold.* Who must be waked?

*Dora.* I am not deaf: you fright me.  
What ails you?

*Harold.* Speak.

*Dora.* You know her, Eva.

*Harold.* *Eva!*

[*Eva opens the door and stands in the entry.*  
She!

*Eva.* Make her happy, then, and I  
forgive you. [*Falls dead.*

*Dora.* Happy! What? Edgar? Is  
it so? Can it be?

They told me so. Yes, yes! I see it  
all now.

Oh, she has fainted. Sister, Eva, sister!  
He is yours again — he will love *you*  
again;

I give him back to you again. Look up!  
One word, or do but smile! Sweet, do  
you hear me?

[*Puts her hand on Eva's heart.*  
There, there — the heart, O God! — the  
poor young heart  
Broken at last — all still — and nothing left  
To live for.

[*Falls on body of her sister.*  
*Harold.* Living . . . dead . . .

She said 'all still.  
Nothing to live for.'

She — she knows me — now . . .

(*A pause.*)  
She knew me from the first, she juggled  
with me,

She hid this sister, told me she was dead —  
I have wasted pity on her — not dead  
now —

No! acting, playing on me, both of them.  
*They* drag the river for her! no, not  
they!

Playing on me — not dead now — a swoon  
— a scene —

Yet — how she made her wail as for the  
dead!

*Enter MILLY.*

*Milly.* Pleäse, Mister 'Arold.

*Harold (roughly).* Well?



*Milly.* The owd man's coom'd ageän  
to 'issen, an' wants

To hev a word wi' ye about the marriage.

*Harold.* The what?

*Milly.* The marriage.

*Harold.* The marriage?

*Milly.* Yeäs, the marriage.

Granny says marriages be maäde i' 'eaven.

*Harold.* She lies! They are made  
in Hell. Child, can't you see?

Tell them to fly for a doctor.

*Milly.* Oh, law—yeäs, Sir!

I'll run fur 'im mysen. [*Exit.*]

*Harold.* All silent there,

Yes, deathlike! Dead? I dare not  
look: if dead,

Were it best to steal away, to spare my-  
self,

And her too, pain, pain, pain?

My curse on all

This world of mud, on all its idiot gleams

Of pleasure, all the foul fatalities

That blast our natural passions into  
pains!

*Enter DOBSON.*

*Dobson.* You, Master Hedgar, Harold,  
or whatever

They calls ye, for I warrants that ye goäs  
By haäfe a scoor o' naämes—out o' the  
chamber.

[*Dragging him past the body.*]

*Harold.* Not that way, man! Curse  
on your brutal strength!

I cannot pass that way.

*Dobson.* Out o' the chamber!

I'll mash tha into nowt.

*Harold.* The mere wild-beast!

*Dobson.* Out o' the chamber, dang  
tha!

*Harold.* Lout, churl, clown!

[*While they are shouting and strug-  
gling Dora rises and comes be-  
tween them.*]

*Dora (to Dobson).* Peace, let him be:  
it is the chamber of Death!

Sir, you are tenfold more a gentleman,  
A hundred times more worth a woman's  
love,

Than this, this—but I waste no words  
upon him:

His wickedness is like my wretchedness—  
Beyond all language.

(*To Harold.*)

You—you see her there!

Only fifteen when first you came on her,  
And then the sweetest flower of all the  
wolds,

So lovely in the promise of her May,  
So winsome in her grace and gaiety,  
So loved by all the village people here,  
So happy in herself and in her home—

*Dobson (agitated).* Theer, theer! ha'  
done. I can't abeär to see her.

[*Exit.*]

*Dora.* A child, and all as trustful as  
a child!

Five years of shame and suffering broke  
the heart

That only beat for you; and he, the  
father,

Thro' that dishonour which you brought  
upon us,

Has lost his health, his eyesight, even  
his mind.

*Harold (covering his face).* Enough!

*Dora.* It seem'd so; only there was left  
A second daughter, and to her you came  
Veiling one sin to act another.

*Harold.* No!

You wrong me there! hear, hear me!

I wish'd, if you— [*Pauses.*]

*Dora.* If I—

*Harold.* Could love me, could be  
brought to love me

As I loved you—

*Dora.* What then?

*Harold.* I wish'd, I hoped

To make, to make—

*Dora.* What did you hope to make?

*Harold.* 'Twere best to make an end  
of my lost life.

O Dora, Dora!

*Dora.* What did you hope to make?

*Harold.* Make, make! I cannot find  
the word—forgive it—

Amends.

*Dora.* For what? to whom?

*Harold.* To him, to you!

[*Falling at her feet.*]

*Dora.* To him! to me!

No, not with all your wealth,  
Your land, your life! Out in the fiercest  
storm

That ever made earth tremble—he,  
nor I—

The shelter of *your* roof— not for one  
moment —  
Nothing from *you* !  
Sunk in the deepest pit of pauperism,  
Push'd from all doors as if we bore the  
plague,  
Smitten with fever in the open field,  
Laid famine-stricken at the gates of  
Death —

Nothing from you !

But she there — her last word  
Forgave — and I forgive you. If you  
ever  
Forgive yourself, you are even lower and  
baser  
Than even I can well believe you. Go !  
[*He lies at her feet. Curtain falls.*]

# DEMETER

## AND OTHER POEMS.

### TO THE MARQUIS OF DUF- FERIN AND AVA.

I.

At times our Britain cannot rest,  
At times her steps are swift and rash;  
She moving, at her girdle clash  
The golden keys of East and West.

II.

Not swift or rash, when late she lent  
The sceptres of her West, her East,  
To one, that ruling has increased  
Her greatness and her self-content.

III.

Your rule has made the people love  
Their ruler. Your viceregal days  
Have added fulness to the phrase  
Of 'Gauntlet in the velvet glove.'

IV.

But since your name will grow with Time,  
Not all, as honouring your fair name  
Of Statesman, have I made the name  
A golden portal to my rhyme :

V.

But more, that you and yours may know  
From me and mine, how dear a debt  
We owed you, and are owing yet  
To you and yours, and still would owe.

VI.

For he — your India was his Fate,  
And drew him over sea to you —  
He fain had ranged her thro' and thro',  
To serve her myriads and the State, —

VII.

A soul that, watch'd from earliest youth,  
And on thro' many a brightening year,

Had never swerved for craft or fear,  
By one side-path, from simple truth;

VIII.

Who might have chased and claspt  
Renown  
And caught her chaplet here — and  
there  
In haunts of jungle-poison'd air  
The flame of life went wavering down;

IX.

But ere he left your fatal shore,  
And lay on that funereal boat,  
Dying, 'Unspeakable,' he wrote,  
'Their kindness,' and he wrote no more;

X.

And sacred is the latest word;  
And now the Was, the Might-have-  
been,  
And those lone rites I have not seen,  
And one drear sound I have not heard,

XI.

Are dreams that scarce will let me be,  
Not there to bid my boy farewell,  
When That within the coffin fell,  
Fell — and flash'd into the Red Sea,

XII.

Beneath a hard Arabian moon  
And alien stars. To question, why  
The sons before the fathers die,  
Not mine! and I may meet him soon;

XIII.

But while my life's late eve endures,  
Nor settles into hueless gray,  
My memories of his briefer day  
Will mix with love for you and yours.

ON THE JUBILEE OF QUEEN  
VICTORIA.

## I.

FIFTY times the rose has flower'd and faded,  
Fifty times the golden harvest fallen,  
Since our Queen assumed the globe, the sceptre.

## II.

She beloved for a kindliness  
Rare in Fable or History,  
Queen, and Empress of India,  
Crown'd so long with a diadem  
Never worn by a worthier,  
Now with prosperous auguries  
Comes at last to the bounteous  
Crowning year of her Jubilee.

## III.

Nothing of the lawless, of the Despot,  
Nothing of the vulgar, or vainglorious,  
All is gracious, gentle, great and Queenly.

## IV.

You then joyfully, all of you,  
Set the mountain aflame to-night,  
Shoot your stars to the firmament,  
Deck your houses, illuminate  
All your towns for a festival,  
And in each let a multitude  
Loyal, each, to the heart of it,  
One full voice of allegiance,  
Hail the fair Ceremonial  
Of this year of her Jubilee.

## V.

Queen, as true to womanhood as Queen-  
hood,  
Glorying in the glories of her people,  
Sorrowing with the sorrows of the lowest!

## VI.

You, that wanton in affluence,  
Spare not now to be bountiful,  
Call your poor to regale with you,  
All the lowly, the destitute,  
Make their neighbourhood health-  
fuller,  
Give your gold to the Hospital,

Let the weary be comforted,  
Let the needy be banqueted,  
Let the maim'd in his heart rejoice  
At this glad Ceremonial,  
And this year of her Jubilee.

## VII.

Henry's fifty years are all in shadow,  
Gray with distance Edward's fifty sum-  
mers,  
Ev'n her Grandsire's fifty half forgotten.

## VIII.

You, the Patriot Architect,  
You that shape for Eternity,  
Raise a stately memorial,  
Make it regally gorgeous,  
Some Imperial Institute,  
Rich in symbol, in ornament,  
Which may speak to the centuries,  
All the centuries after us,  
Of this great Ceremonial,  
And this year of her Jubilee.

## IX.

Fifty years of ever-broadening Com-  
merce!  
Fifty years of ever-brightening Science!  
Fifty years of ever-widening Empire!

## X.

You, the Mighty, the Fortunate,  
You, the Lord-territorial,  
You, the Lord-manufacturer,  
You, the hardy, laborious,  
Patient children of Albion,  
You, Canadian, Indian,  
Australasian, African,  
All your hearts be in harmony,  
All your voices in unison,  
Singing 'Hail to the glorious  
Golden year of her Jubilee!'

## XI.

Are there thunders moaning in the dis-  
tance?  
Are there spectres moving in the dark-  
ness?  
Trust the Hand of Light will lead her  
people,  
Till the thunders pass, the spectres  
vanish,

And the Light is Victor, and the darkness  
Dawns into the Jubilee of the Ages.

TO PROFESSOR JEBB,

WITH THE FOLLOWING POEM.

FAIR things are slow to fade away,  
Bear witness you, that yesterday<sup>1</sup>  
From out the Ghost of Pindar in  
you  
Roll'd an Olympian; and they say<sup>2</sup>

That here the torpid mummy wheat  
Of Egypt bore a grain as sweet  
As that which gilds the glebe of  
England,  
Sunn'd with a summer of milder heat.

So may this legend for awhile,  
If greeted by your classic smile,  
Tho' dead in its Trinacrian Enna,  
Blossom again on a colder isle.

DEMETER AND PERSEPHONE.

(IN ENNA.)

FAINT as a climate-changing bird that  
flies  
All night across the darkness, and at  
dawn  
Falls on the threshold of her native land,  
And can no more, thou camest, O my  
child,  
Led upward by the God of ghosts and  
dreams,  
Who laid thee at Eleusis, dazed and  
dumb  
With passing thro' at once from state  
to state,  
Until I brought thee hither, that the  
day,  
When here thy hands let fall the gather'd  
flower,  
Might break thro' clouded memories  
once again  
On thy lost self. A sudden nightingale  
Saw thee, and flash'd into a frolic of  
song

<sup>1</sup> In Bologna.

<sup>2</sup> They say, for the fact is doubtful.

And welcome; and a gleam as of the  
moon,  
When first she peers along the tremulous  
deep,  
Fled wavering o'er thy face, and chased  
away  
That shadow of a likeness to the king  
Of shadows, thy dark mate. Persephone!  
Queen of the dead no more — my child!  
Thine eyes  
Again were human-godlike, and the Sun  
Burst from a swimming fleece of winter  
gray,  
And robed thee in his day from head  
to feet —  
'Mother!' and I was folded in thine  
arms.

Child, those imperial, disimpassion'd  
eyes  
Awed even me at first, thy mother — eyes  
That oft had seen the serpent-wanded  
power  
Draw downward into Hades with his  
drift  
Of flickering spectres, lighted from below  
By the red race of fiery Phlegethon;  
But when before have Gods or men be-  
held  
The Life that had descended re-arise,  
And lighted from above him by the Sun?  
So mighty was the mother's childless  
cry,  
A cry that rang thro' Hades, Earth, and  
Heaven!

So in this pleasant vale we stand again,  
The field of Enna, now once more ablaze  
With flowers that brighten as thy foot-  
step falls,  
All flowers — but for one black blur of  
earth  
Left by that closing chasm, thro' which  
the car  
Of dark Aidoneus rising rapt thee hence.  
And here, my child, tho' folded in thine  
arms,  
I feel the deathless heart of motherhood  
Within me shudder, lest the naked glebe  
Should yawn once more into the gulf,  
and thence  
The shrilly whinnings of the team of  
Hell,

Ascending, pierce the glad and songful  
 air,  
 And all at once their arch'd necks, mid-  
 night-maned,  
 Jet upward thro' the mid-day blossom.  
 No!  
 For, see, thy foot has touch'd it; all the  
 space  
 Of blank earth-baldness clothes itself  
 afresh,  
 And breaks into the crocus-purple hour  
 That saw thee vanish.

Child, when thou wert gone,  
 I envied human wives, and nested birds,  
 Yea, the cubb'd lioness; went in search  
 of thee  
 Thro' many a palace, many a cot, and  
 gave  
 Thy breast to ailing infants in the night,  
 And set the mother waking in amaze  
 To find her sick one whole; and forth  
 again  
 Among the wail of midnight winds, and  
 cried,  
 'Where is my loved one? Wherefore  
 do ye wail?'  
 And out from all the night an answer  
 shrill'd,  
 'We know not, and we know not why  
 we wail.'  
 I climb'd on all the cliffs of all the  
 seas,  
 And ask'd the waves that moan about  
 the world,  
 'Where? do ye make your moaning for  
 my child?'  
 And round from all the world the voices  
 came,  
 'We know not, and we know not why  
 we moan.'  
 'Where?' and I stared from every eagle-  
 peak,  
 I thridded the black heart of all the  
 woods,  
 I peer'd thro' tomb and cave, and in the  
 storms  
 Of Autumn swept across the city, and  
 heard  
 The murmur of their temples chanting  
 me,  
 Me, me, the desolate Mother! 'Where?'  
 — and turn'd,

And fled by many a waste, forlorn of  
 man,  
 And griev'd for man thro' all my grief  
 for thee,—  
 The jungle rooted in his shatter'd hearth,  
 The serpent coil'd about his broken shaft,  
 The scorpion crawling over naked  
 skulls;—  
 I saw the tiger in the ruin'd fane  
 Spring from his fallen God; but trace of  
 thee  
 I saw not; and far on, and, following out  
 A league of labyrinthine darkness, came  
 On three gray heads beneath a gleaming  
 rift.  
 'Where?' and I heard one voice from  
 all the three,  
 'We know not, for we spin the lives of  
 men,  
 And not of Gods, and know not why we  
 spin!  
 There is a Fate beyond us.' Nothing  
 knew.

Last, as the likeness of a dying man,  
 Without his knowledge, from him flits to  
 warn  
 A far-off friendship that he comes no  
 more,  
 So he, the God of dreams, who heard  
 my cry,  
 Drew from thyself the likeness of thyself  
 Without thy knowledge, and thy shadow  
 past  
 Before me, crying, 'The Bright one in  
 the highest  
 Is brother of the Dark one in the lowest,  
 And Bright and Dark have sworn that I,  
 the child  
 Of thee, the great Earth-Mother, thee,  
 the Power  
 That lifts her buried life from gloom to  
 bloom,  
 Should be for ever and for evermore  
 The Bride of Darkness.'

So the Shadow wail'd.  
 Then I, Earth-Goddess, cursed the Gods  
 of Heaven.  
 I would not mingle with their feasts; to  
 me  
 Their nectar smack'd of hemlock on the  
 lips,



Their rich ambrosia tasted aconite.  
 The man, that only lives and loves an  
 hour,  
 Seem'd nobler than their hard Eternities.  
 My quick tears kill'd the flower, my  
 ravings hush'd  
 The bird, and lost in utter grief I fail'd  
 To send my life thro' olive-yard and  
 vine  
 And golden grain, my gift to helpless  
 man.  
 Rain-rotten died the wheat, the barley-  
 spears  
 Were hollow-husk'd, the leaf fell, and  
 the sun,  
 Pale at my grief, drew down before his  
 time  
 Sickening, and Ætna kept her winter  
 snow.  
 Then He, the brother of this Darkness,  
 He  
 Who still is highest, glancing from his  
 height  
 On earth a fruitless fallow, when he  
 miss'd  
 The wonted steam of sacrifice, the praise  
 And prayer of men, decreed that thou  
 should'st dwell  
 For nine white moons of each whole year  
 with me,  
 Three dark ones in the shadow with thy  
 King.

· Once more the reaper in the gleam of  
 dawn  
 Will see me by the landmark far away,  
 Blessing his field, or seated in the dusk  
 Of even, by the lonely threshing-floor,  
 Rejoicing in the harvest and the grange.  
 Yet I, Earth-Goddess, am but ill-  
 content  
 With them, who still are highest. Those  
 gray heads,  
 What meant they by their 'Fate beyond  
 the Fates'  
 But younger kindlier Gods to bear us  
 down,  
 As we bore down the Gods before us?  
 Gods,  
 To quench, not hurl the thunderbolt, to  
 stay,  
 Not spread the plague, the famine; Gods  
 indeed,

To send the noon into the night and  
 break  
 The sunless halls of Hades into Heaven?  
 Till thy dark lord accept and love the  
 Sun,  
 And all the Shadow die into the Light,  
 When thou shalt dwell the whole bright  
 year with me,  
 And souls of men, who grew beyond  
 their race,  
 And made themselves as Gods against  
 the fear  
 Of Death and Hell; and thou that hast  
 from men,  
 As Queen of Death, that worship which  
 is Fear,  
 Henceforth, as having risen from out the  
 dead,  
 Shalt ever send thy life along with mine  
 From buried grain thro' springing blade,  
 and bless  
 Their garner'd Autumn also, reap with  
 me,  
 Earth-mother, in the harvest hymns of  
 Earth  
 The worship which is Love, and see no  
 more  
 The Stone, the Wheel, the dimly-  
 glimmering lawns  
 Of that Elysium, all the hateful fires  
 Of torment, and the shadowy warrior  
 glide  
 Along the silent field of Asphodel.

OWD ROÄ.<sup>1</sup>

NAÄV, noä mander<sup>2</sup> o' use to be callin'  
 'im Roä, Roä, Roä, '  
 Fur the dog's stoän-deäf, an' e's blind, 'e  
 can naither stan' nor goä.

But I meäns fur to maäke 'is owd aäge  
 as 'appy as iver I can,  
 Fur I owäs owd Roäver moor nor I iver  
 owäd mottal man.

Thou's rode of 'is back when a babby,  
 afor thou was gotten too owd,  
 Fur 'e'd fetch an' carry like owt, 'e was  
 allus as good as gowd.

<sup>1</sup> Old Rover.    <sup>2</sup> Manner.

Eh, but 'e'd fight wi' a will *when* 'e  
fowt; 'e could howd<sup>1</sup> 'is oan,  
An' Roä was the dog as knaw'd when  
an' where to bury his boane.

An' 'e kep' his heäd hoop like a king, an'  
'e'd niver not down wi' 'is taäl,  
Fur 'e'd niver done nowt to be shaämed  
on, when we was i' Howlaby  
Daäle.

An' 'e sarved me sa well when 'e lived,  
that, Dick, when 'e cooms to be  
deäl,

I thinks as I'd like fur to hev soom soort  
of a sarvice reäd.

Fur 'e's moor good sense na the Parlia-  
ment man 'at stans fur us 'ere,  
An' I'd voät fur 'im, my oän sen, if 'e  
could but stan' fur the Shere.

'Faäithful an' True' — them words be i'  
Scriptur — an' Faäithful an' True  
'Ull be fun'<sup>2</sup> upo' four short legs ten times  
fur one upo' two.

An' maäybe they'll walk upo' two but I  
knavs they runs upo' four,<sup>3</sup> —  
Bedtime, Dicky! but waäit till tha 'eärs  
it be strikin' the hour.

Fur I wants to tell tha o' Roä when we  
lived i' Howlaby Daäle,  
Ten year sin' — Naäy — naäy! tha mun  
nobbut hev' one glass of aäle.

Straänge an' owd-farran'd<sup>4</sup> the 'ouse, an'  
belt<sup>5</sup> long afoor my daäy  
Wi' haäfe o' the chimleys a-twizzen'd<sup>6</sup>  
an' twined like a band o' haäy.

The fellers as maäkes them picturs, 'ud  
coom at the fall o' the year,  
An' saddle their ends upo' stools to pictur  
the door-poorch there,

An' the Heagle 'as hed two heäds stannin'  
there o' the brokken stick;<sup>7</sup>  
An' they niver 'ed seed sich ivin'<sup>8</sup> as  
graw'd hall over the brick;

<sup>1</sup> Hold. <sup>2</sup> Found. <sup>3</sup> 'Ou' as in 'house.'

<sup>4</sup> 'Owd-farran'd,' old-fashioned. <sup>5</sup> Built.

<sup>6</sup> 'Twizzen'd,' twisted. <sup>7</sup> On a staff *ragulä*.

<sup>8</sup> Ivy.

An' theree i' the 'ouse one night — but  
it's down, an' all on it now  
Goän into mangles an' tonups,<sup>1</sup> an'  
raäved slick thruf by the plow —

Theree, when the 'ouse wur a house, one  
night I wur sittin' aloän,  
Wi' Roäver athurt my feeät, an' sleeäpin  
still as a stoän,

Of a Christmas Eäve, an' as cowd as  
this, an' the midders<sup>2</sup> as white,  
An' the fences all on 'em bolster'd oop  
wi' the windle<sup>3</sup> that night;

An' the cat wur a-sleeäpin alongside  
Roäver, but I wur awaäke,  
An' smoäkin' an' thinkin' o' things —  
Doänt maäke thysen sick wi' the  
caäke.

Fur the men ater supper 'ed sung their  
songs an' 'ed 'ed their beer,  
An' 'ed goän their waäys; ther was nob-  
but three, an' noän on 'em theree.

They was all on 'em fear'd o' the Ghoäst  
an' dussn't not sleeäp i' the 'ouse,  
But Dicky, the Ghoäst moästlins<sup>4</sup> was  
nobbut a rat or a mouse.

An' I looökt out wonst<sup>5</sup> at the night,  
an' the daäle was all of a thaw,  
Fur I seed the beck coomin' down like a  
long black snaäke i' the snaw,

An' I heärd greät heäps o' the snaw  
slushin' down fro' the bank to the  
beck,  
An' then as I stood i' the doorwaäy, I  
feeäld it drip o' my neck.

Saw I turn'd in ageän, an' I thowt o'  
the good owd times 'at was goän,  
An' the munney they maäde by the war,  
an' the times 'at was coomin' on;

Fur I thowt if the Staäte was a-gawin'  
to let in furriners' wheät,  
Howiver was British farmers to stan'  
ageän o' their feeät.

<sup>1</sup> Mangolds and turnips.

<sup>2</sup> Meadows. <sup>3</sup> Drifted snow.

<sup>4</sup> 'Moästlins,' for the most part, generally.

<sup>5</sup> Once.

Howiver was I fur to find my rent an'  
to paäy my men?

An' all along o' the feller<sup>1</sup> as turn'd 'is  
back of hissen.

Thou slep' i' the chaumber above us, we  
couldn't ha' 'eärd tha call,

Sa Moother 'ed tell'd ma to bring tha  
down, an' thy craädle an' all;

Fur the gell o' the farm 'at slep' wi' tha  
then 'ed gotten wer leäve,

Fur to goä that night to 'er foälk by cause  
o' the Christmas Eäve;

But I cleän forgot tha, my lad, when  
Moother 'ed gotten to bed,

An' I slep' i' my chair hup-on-end, an'  
the Freeä Traäde runn'd i' my  
'ead,

Till I dreäm'd 'at Squire walkt in, an' I  
says to him, 'Squire, ya're laäte,'

Then I seed at 'is faäce wur as red as the  
Yule-block there i' the graäte.

An' 'e says, 'Can ya paäy me the rent to-  
night?' an' I says to 'im, 'Noä,'

An' 'e cotch'd howd hard o' my hairm,<sup>2</sup>  
'Then hout to-night tha shall goä.'

'Tha'll niver,' says I, 'be a-turnin' ma  
hout upo' Christmas Eäve?'

Then I waäked an' I fun it was Roäver  
a-tuggin' an' teärin' my slicäve.

An' I thowt as 'e'd goän cleän-wud,<sup>3</sup> fur  
I noäwaäys knaw'd 'is intent;

An' I says, 'Git awaäy, ya beäst,' an' I  
fetcht 'im a kick an' 'e went.

Then 'e tumbled up stairs, fur I 'eärd  
'im, as if 'e'd 'a brokken 'is neck,

An' I'd cleär forgot, little Dicky, thy  
chaumber door wouldn't sneck;<sup>4</sup>

An' I slep' i' my chair ageän wi' my  
hairm hingin' down to the floor,

An' I thowt it was Roäver a-tuggin' an'  
teärin' me wuss nor afoor,

An' I thowt 'at I kick'd 'im ageän, but I  
kick'd thy Moother istead.

'What arta snorin' theere fur? the house  
is afire,' she said.

Thy Moother 'ed beän a-naggin' about  
the gell o' the farm,

She offens 'ud spy summut wrong when  
there warn't not a mossel o' harm;

An' she didn't not solidly meän I wur  
gawin' that waäy to the bad,

Fur the gell<sup>1</sup> was as howry a trollope as  
iver traäpes'd i' the squad.

But Moother was free of 'er tongue, as I  
offens 'ev tell'd 'er mysen,

Sa I kep' i' my chair, fur I thowt she  
was nobbut a-rilin' ma then.

An' I says, 'I'd be good to tha, Bess, if  
tha'd onywaäys let ma be good,'

But she skelpt ma haäfe ower i' the chair,  
an' screäd like a Howl gone  
wud<sup>2</sup>—

'Ya mun run fur the lether.<sup>3</sup> Git oop,  
if ya're onywaäys good for owt.'

And I says, 'If I beänt noäwaäys— not  
nowadaäys— good fur nowt—

'Yit I beänt sich a Nowt<sup>4</sup> of all Nowts  
as 'ull hallus do as 'e's bid.'

'But the stairs is afire,' she said; then I  
seed 'er a-cryin', I did.

An' she beäld, 'Ya mun saäve little Dick,  
an' be sharp about it an' all,'

Sa I runs to the yard fur a lether, an'  
sets 'im ageän the wall,

An' I claums an' I mashes the winder  
hin, when I gits to the top,

But the heät druv hout i' my heyest till I  
feäld mysen ready to drop.

<sup>1</sup> The girl was as dirty a slut as ever trudged  
in the mud, but there is a sense of slatternliness  
in 'traäpes'd' which is not expressed in 'trudged.'

<sup>2</sup> She half overturned me and shrieked like an  
owl gone mad. <sup>3</sup> Ladder.

<sup>4</sup> A thoroughly insignificant or worthless  
person.

<sup>1</sup> Pecl. <sup>2</sup> Arm. <sup>3</sup> Mad. <sup>4</sup> Latch.

Thy Moother was howdin' the lether, an'  
tellin' me not to be skeärd,  
An' I wasn't afeärd, or I thinks leaäst-  
waäys as I wasn't afeärd;

But I couldn't see fur the smoåke wheree  
thou was a-liggin' my lad,  
An' Roäver was there i' the chaumber  
a-yowlin' an' yaupin' like mad;

An' thou was a-beälin' likewise, an' a-  
squeälin', as if tha was bit,  
An' it wasn't a bite but a burn, fur the  
merk's<sup>1</sup> o' thy shou'der yit;

Then I call'd out Roä, Roä, Roä, thaw  
I didn't haäfe think as 'e'd 'ear,  
*But 'e coom'd thurf the fire wi' my bairn  
'i' 'is mouth to the winder there!*

He coom'd like a Hangel o' marcy as  
soon as 'e 'eärd 'is naäme,  
Or like tother Hangel i' Scriptur 'at  
summun seed i' the flaäme,

When summun 'ed hax'd fur a son, an'  
'e promised a son to she,  
An' Roä was as good as the Hangel i'  
saävin' a son fur me.

Sa I browt tha down, an' I says, 'I mun  
gaw up ageän fur Roä.'  
'Gaw up ageän fur the varmint?' I tell'd  
'er, 'Yeäs I mun goä.'

An' I claumb'd up ageän to the winder,  
an' clemm'd<sup>2</sup> owd Roä by the 'eäd,  
An' 'is 'air coom'd off i' my 'ands an' I  
taäked 'im at fust fur deäd;

Fur 'e smell'd like a herse a-singein', an'  
seeäm'd as blind as a poop,  
An' haäfe on 'im bare as a bublin'.<sup>3</sup> I  
couldn't wakken 'im oop,

But I browt 'im down, an' we got to the  
barn, fur the barn wouldn't burn  
Wi' the wind blawin' hard tother waäy,  
an' the wind wasn't like to turn.

An' I kep' a-callin' o' Roä till 'e waggled  
'is taäil fur a bit,  
But the cocks kep' a-crawin' an' crawin'  
all night, an' I 'ears 'em yit;

An' the dogs was a-yowlin' all round, and  
thou was a-squeälin' thysen,  
An' Moother was naggin' an' groänin' an'  
moänin' an' naggin' ageän;

An' I 'eärd the bricks an' the baulks<sup>1</sup>  
rummle down when the roof gev  
waäy,  
Fur the fire was a-raägin' an' raävin' an'  
roarin' like judgment daäy.

Warm enew theree sewer-ly, but the barn  
was as cowl as owt,  
An' we cuddled and huddled together, an'  
happt<sup>2</sup> wersens oop as we mowt.

An' I browt Roä round, but Moother 'ed  
beän sa soäk'd wi' the thaw  
'At she cotch'd 'er death o' cowl that  
night, poor soul, i' the straw.

Haäfe o' the parish runn'd oop when the  
rigtree<sup>3</sup> was tummlin' in —  
Too laäte — but it's all ower now — hall  
hower — an' ten year sin';

Too laäte, tha mun git tha to bed, but  
I'll coom an' I'll squench the light,  
Fur we moänt 'ev naw moor fires — and  
soä little Dick, good-night.

## VASTNESS.

### I.

MANY a hearth upon our dark globe sighs  
after many a vanish'd face,  
Many a planet by many a sun may roll  
with the dust of a vanish'd race.

### II.

Raving politics, never at rest — as this  
poor earth's pale history runs, —  
What is it all but a trouble of ants in the  
gleam of a million million of suns?

<sup>1</sup> Beams.

<sup>2</sup> Wrapt ourselves.

<sup>3</sup> The beam that runs along the roof of the  
house just beneath the ridge.

<sup>1</sup> Mark.

<sup>2</sup> Clutched.

<sup>3</sup> 'Bubbling,' a young unfledged bird.

## III.

Lies upon this side, lies upon that side,  
truthless violence mourn'd by the  
Wise,

Thousands of voices drowning his own in  
a popular torrent of lies upon lies;

## IV.

Stately purposes, valour in battle, glorious  
annals of army and fleet,

Death for the right cause, death for the  
wrong cause, trumpets of victory,  
groans of defeat;

## V.

Innocence seethed in her mother's milk,  
and Charity setting the martyr  
aflake;

Thralldom who walks with the banner of  
Freedom, and recks not to ruin a  
realm in her name.

## VI.

Faith at her zenith, or all but lost in the  
gloom of doubts that darken the  
schools;

Craft with a bunch of all-heal in her  
hand, follow'd up by her vassal  
legion of fools;

## VII.

Trade flying over a thousand seas with  
her spice and her vintage, her silk  
and her corn;

Desolate offing, sailorless harbours,  
famishing populace, wharves for-  
lorn;

## VIII.

Star of the morning, Hope in the sunrise;  
gloom of the evening, Life at a  
close;

Pleasure who flaunts on her wide down-  
way with her flying robe and her  
poison'd rose;

## IX.

Pain, that has crawl'd from the corpse of  
Pleasure, a worm which writhes  
all day, and at night

Stirs up again in the heart of the sleeper,  
and stings him back to the curse  
of the light;

## X.

Wealth with his wines and his wedded  
harlots; honest Poverty, bare to  
the bone;

Opulent Avarice, lean as Poverty;  
Flattery gilding the rift in a  
throne;

## XI.

Fame blowing out from her golden  
trumpet a jubilant challenge to  
Time and to Fate;

Slander, her shadow, sowing the nettle on  
all the laurel'd graves of the Great;

## XII.

Love for the maiden, crown'd with  
marriage, no regrets for aught  
that has been,

Household happiness, gracious chil-  
dren, debtless competence, golden  
mean;

## XIII.

National hatreds of whole generations,  
and pigmy spite of the village  
spire;

Vows that will last to the last death-  
ruckle, and vows that are snapt  
in a moment of fire;

## XIV.

He that has lived for the lust of the  
minute, and died in the doing it,  
flesh without mind;

He that has nail'd all flesh to the Cross,  
till Self died out in the love of  
his kind;

## XV.

Spring and Summer and Autumn and  
Winter, and all these old revolu-  
tions of earth;

All new-old revolutions of Empire —  
change of the tide — what is all of  
it worth?

## XVI.

What the philosophies, all the sciences,  
poesy, varying voices of prayer?

All that is noblest, all that is basest, all  
that is filthy with all that is fair?

## XVII.

What is it all, if we all 'of us end but in  
being our own corpse-coffins at  
last,  
Swallow'd in Vastness, lost in Silence,  
drown'd in the deeps of a mean-  
ingless Past?

## XVIII.

What but a murmur of gnats in the  
gloom, or a moment's anger of  
bees in their hive?—

\* \* \* \*

Peace, let it be! for I loved him, and  
love him for ever: the dead are  
not dead but alive.

Dedicated to the Hon. J. Russell  
Lowell.

## THE RING.

## MIRIAM AND HER FATHER.

*Miriam (singing).*

MELLOW moon of heaven,  
Bright in blue,  
Moon of married hearts,  
Hear me, you!

Twelve times in the year  
Bring me bliss,  
Globing Honey Moons  
Bright as this.

Moon, you fade at times  
From the night.  
Young again you grow  
Out of sight.

Silver crescent-curve,  
Coming soon,  
Globe again, and make  
Honey Moon.

Shall not *my* love last,  
Moon, with you,

For ten thousand years  
Old and new?

*Father.* And who was he with such  
love-drunken eyes  
They made a thousand honey moons of  
one?

*Miriam.* The prophet of his own, my  
Hubert—his  
The words, and mine the setting. 'Air  
and Words,'  
Said Hubert, when I sang the song, 'are  
bride  
And bridegroom.' Does it please you?

*Father.* Mainly, child,  
Because I hear your Mother's voice in  
yours.

She — Why, you shiver tho' the wind  
is west

With all the warmth of summer.

*Miriam.* Well, I felt  
On a sudden I know not what, a breath  
that past

With all the cold of winter.

*Father (muttering to himself).* Even  
so.

The Ghost in Man, the Ghost that once  
was Man,

But cannot wholly free itself from Man,  
Are calling to each other thro' a dawn—  
Stranger than earth has ever seen; the  
veil

Is rending, and the Voices of the day  
Are heard across the Voices of the dark.  
No sudden heaven, nor sudden hell, for  
man,

But thro' the Will of One who knows  
and rules—

And utter knowledge is but utter love—  
Æonian Evolution, swift or slow,  
Thro' all the Spheres—an ever opening  
height,

An ever lessening earth—and she per-  
haps,

My *Miriam*, breaks her latest earthly link  
With me to-day.

*Miriam.* You speak so low, what is  
it?

Your '*Miriam* breaks'—is making a new  
link

Breaking an old one?

*Father.* No, for we, my child,  
Have been till now each other's all-in-all.



*Miriam.* And you the lifelong guardian of the child.

*Father.* I, and one other whom you have not known.

*Miriam.* And who? what other?

*Father.* Whither are you bound? For Naples which we only left in May?

*Miriam.* No! father, Spain, but Hubert brings me home

With April and the swallow. Wish me joy!

*Father.* What need to wish when Hubert weds in you

The heart of Love, and you the soul of Truth

In Hubert?

*Miriam.* Tho' you used to call me once

The lonely maiden-Princess of the wood, Who meant to sleep her hundred summers out

Before a kiss should wake her.

*Father.* Ay, but now Your fairy Prince has found you, take this ring.

*Miriam.* 'Io t'amo' — and these diamonds — beautiful!

'From Walter,' and for me from you then?

*Father.* Well,

One way for Miriam.

*Miriam.* Miriam am I not?

*Father.* This ring bequeath'd you by your mother, child,

Was to be given you — such her dying wish —

Given on the morning when you came of age

Or on the day you married. Both the days

Now close in one. The ring is doubly yours.

Why do you look so gravely at the tower?

*Miriam.* I never saw it yet so all ablaze

With creepers crimsoning to the pinnacles,

As if perpetual sunset linger'd there, And all ablaze too in the lake below!

And how the birds that circle round the tower

Are cheeping to each other of their flight To summer lands!

*Father.* And that has made you grave?

Fly — care not. Birds and brides must leave the nest.

Child, I am happier in your happiness Than in mine own.

*Miriam.* It is not that!

*Father.* What else?

*Miriam.* That chamber in the tower.

*Father.* What chamber, child?

Your nurse is here?

*Miriam.* My Mother's nurse and mine. She comes to dress me in my bridal veil.

*Father.* What did she say?

*Miriam.* She said, that you and I Had been abroad for my poor health so

long

She fear'd I had forgotten her, and I ask'd

About my Mother, and she said, 'Thy hair

Is golden like thy Mother's, not so fine.'

*Father.* What then? what more?

*Miriam.* She said — perhaps indeed She wander'd, having wander'd now so far

Beyond the common date of death — that you,

When I was smaller than the statuette Of my dear Mother on your bracket

here —

You took me to that chamber in the tower,

The topmost — a chest there, by which you knelt —

And there were books and dresses — left to me,

A ring too which you kiss'd, and I, she said,

I babbled, Mother, Mother — as I used To prattle to her picture — stretch'd my

hands

As if I saw her; then a woman came And caught me from my nurse. I hear

her yet —

A sound of anger like a distant storm.

*Father.* Garrulous old crone.

*Miriam.* Poor nurse!

*Father.* I bade her keep,

Like a seal'd book, all mention of the ring,

For I myself would tell you all to-day.

*Miriam.* 'She too might speak to-day,' she mumbled. Still,

I scarce have learnt the title of your book,

But you will turn the pages.

*Father.* Ay, to-day!  
I brought you to that chamber on your  
third

September birthday with your nurse, and  
felt

An icy breath play on me, while I stooped  
To take and kiss the ring.

*Miriam.* This very ring  
Is to 'amo?

*Father.* Yes, for some wild hope was  
mine

That, in the misery of my married life,  
Miriam your Mother might appear to  
me.

She came to you, not me. The storm,  
you hear

Far-off, is Muriel — your stepmother's  
voice.

*Miriam.* Vext, that you thought my  
Mother came to me?

Or at my crying 'Mother'? or to find  
My Mother's diamonds hidden from her  
there,

Like worldly beauties in the Cell, not  
shown

To dazzle all that see them?

*Father.* Wait awhile.  
Your Mother and step-mother — Miriam  
Erne

And Muriel Erne — the two were cousins  
— lived

With Muriel's mother on the down, that  
sees

A thousand squares of corn and meadow,  
far

As the gray deep, a landscape which  
your eyes

Have many a time ranged over when a  
babe.

*Miriam.* I climb'd the hill with  
Hubert yesterday,

And from the thousand squares, one  
silent voice

Came on the wind, and seem'd to say  
'Again.'

We saw far off an old forsaken house,  
Then home, and past the ruin'd mill.

*Father.* And there  
I found these cousins often by the brook,  
For Miriam sketch'd and Muriel threw  
the fly;

The girls of equal age, but one was fair,

And one was dark, and both were beauti-  
ful.

No voice for either spoke within my heart  
Then, for the surface eye, that only dotes  
On outward beauty, glancing from the one  
To the other, knew not that which  
pleased it most,

The raven ringlet or the gold; but both  
Were dowerless, and myself, I used to  
walk

This Terrace — morbid, melancholy;  
mine

And yet not mine the hall, the farm, the  
field;

For all that ample woodland whisper'd  
'debt,'

The brook that feeds this lakelet mur-  
mur'd 'debt,'

And in yon arching avenue of old elms,  
Tho' mine, not mine, I heard the sober  
rook

And carrion crow cry 'mortgage.'

*Miriam.* Father's fault  
Visited on the children!

*Father.* Ay, but then  
A kinsman, dying, summon'd me to  
Rome —

He left me wealth — and while I jour-  
ney'd hence,

And saw the world fly by me like a  
dream,

And while I communed with my truest  
self,

I woke to all of truest in myself,  
Till, in the gleam of those mid-summer  
dawns,

The form of Muriel faded, and the face  
Of Miriam grew upon me, till I knew;

And past and future mix'd in Heaven  
and made

The rosy twilight of a perfect day.

*Miriam.* So glad? no tear for him,  
who left you wealth,  
Your kinsman?

*Father.* I had seen the man but once;  
He loved my name not me; and then I  
pass'd

Home, and thro' Venice, where a jeweller,  
So far gone down, or so far up in life,  
That he was nearing his own hundred,  
sold

This ring to me, then laugh'd, 'The ring  
is weird.'

And weird and worn and wizard-like was  
he.

'Why weird?' I ask'd him; and he said,  
'The souls

Of two repentant Lovers guard the ring;  
Then with a ribald twinkle in his bleak  
eyes —

'And if you give the ring to any maid,  
They still remember what it cost them  
here,

And bind the maid to love you by the  
ring;

And if the ring were stolen from the  
maid,

The theft were death or madness to the  
thief,

So sacred those Ghost Lovers hold the  
gift.'

And then he told their legend:

'Long ago  
Two lovers parted by a scurrilous tale  
Had quarrell'd, till the man repenting  
sent

This ring "Io t'amo" to his best beloved,  
And sent it on her birthday. She in  
wrath

Return'd it on her birthday, and that day  
His death-day, when, half-frenzied by the  
ring,

He wildly fought a rival suitor, him  
The causer of that scandal, fought and  
fell;

And she that came to part them all too  
late,

And found a corpse and silence, drew the  
ring

From his dead finger, wore it till her  
death,

Shrined him within the temple of her  
heart,

Made every moment of her after life  
A virgin victim to his memory,  
And dying rose, and rear'd her arms, and  
cried

"I see him, Io t'amo, Io t'amo."

*Miriam.* Legend or true? so tender  
should be true!

Did *he* believe it? did you ask him?  
*Father.* Ay!

But that half skeleton, like a barren  
ghost

From out the fleshless world of spirits,  
laugh'd:

A hollow laughter!

*Miriam.* Vile, so near the ghost  
Himself, to laugh at love in death! But  
you?

*Father.* Well, as the bygone lover  
thro' this ring

Had sent his cry for her forgiveness, I  
Would call thro' this 'Io t'amo' to the  
heart

Of *Miriam*; then I bade the man en-  
grave

'From *Miriam*' on the ring, and send it  
— wrote

Name, surname, all as clear as noon, but  
he —

Some younger hand must have engraven  
the ring —

His fingers were so stiffen'd by the frost  
Of seven and ninety winters, that he  
scrawl'd

A '*Miriam*' that might seem a '*Muriel*';  
And *Muriel* claim'd and open'd what I  
meant

For *Miriam*, took the ring, and flaunted  
it

Before that other whom I loved and love.  
A mountain stay'd me here, a minster  
there,

A galleried palace, or a battlefield,  
Where stood the sheaf of Peace: but —  
coming home —

And on your Mother's birthday — all but  
yours —

A week betwixt — and when the tower as  
now

Was all ablaze with crimson to the roof,  
And all ablaze too plunging in the lake  
Head-foremost — who were those that  
stood between

The tower and that rich phantom of the  
tower?

*Muriel* and *Miriam*, each in white, and  
like

May-blossoms in mid autumn — was it  
they?

A light shot upward on them from the  
lake.

What sparkled there? whose hand was  
that? they stood

So close together. I am not keen of  
sight,

But coming nearer — *Muriel* had the  
ring —

'O Miriam! have you given your ring to her?

O Miriam!' Miriam redden'd, Muriel clench'd

The hand that wore it, till I cried again: 'O Miriam, if you love me take the ring!' She glanced at me, at Muriel, and was mute.

'Nay, if you cannot love me, let it be.' Then — Muriel standing ever statue-like — She turn'd, and in her soft imperial way And saying gently: 'Muriel, by your leave,'

Unclosed the hand, and from it drew the ring, And gave it me, who pass'd it down her own,

'Io t'amo, all is well then.' Muriel fled. *Miriam.* Poor Muriel!

*Father.* Ay, poor Muriel when you hear

What follows! Miriam loved me from the first,

Not thro' the ring; but on her marriage-morn

This birthday, death-day, and betrothal ring,

Laid on her table overnight, was gone; And after hours of search and doubt and threats,

And hubbub, Muriel enter'd with it, 'See! —

Found in a chink of that old moulder'd floor!'

My Miriam nodded with a pitying smile, As who should say 'that those who lose can find.'

Then I and she were married for a year,

One year without a storm, or even a cloud;

And you my Miriam born within the year;

And she my Miriam dead within the year. I sat beside her dying, and she gaspt:

'The books, the miniature, the lace are hers,

My ring too when she comes of age, or when

She marries; you — you loved me, kept your love word.

You love me still "Io t'amo." — Muriel — no —

She cannot love; she loves her own hard self,

Her firm will, her fix'd purpose. Promise me,

Miriam not Muriel — she shall have the ring.'

And there the light of other life, which lives

Beyond our burial and our buried eyes, Glean'd for a moment in her own on earth.

I swore the vow, then with my latest kiss

Upon them, closed her eyes, which would not close,

But kept their watch upon the ring and you.

Your birthday was her death-day. *Miriam.* O poor Mother!

And you, poor desolate Father, and poor me,

The little senseless, worthless, wordless babe,

Saved when your life was wreck'd!

*Father.* Desolate? yes! Desolate as that sailor, whom the storm

Had parted from his comrade in the boat, And dash'd half dead on barren sands, was I.

Nay, you were my one solace; only — you

Were always ailing. Muriel's mother sent,

And sure am I, by Muriel, one day came And saw you, shook her head, and patted yours,

And smiled, and making with a kindly pinch

Each poor pale cheek a momentary rose — 'That should be fix'd,' she said; 'your pretty bud,

So blighted here, would flower into full health

Among our heath and bracken. Let her come!

And we will feed her with our mountain air,

And send her home to you rejoicing.' No —

We could not part. And once, when you my girl

Rode on my shoulder home — the tiny fist

Had graspt a daisy from your Mother's  
grave —  
By the lych-gate was Muriel. 'Ay,' she  
said,  
'Among the tombs in this damp vale of  
yours!  
You scorn my Mother's warning, but the  
child  
Is paler than before. We often walk  
In open sun, and see beneath our feet  
The mist of autumn gather from your  
lake,  
And shroud the tower; and once we  
only saw  
Your gilded vane, a light above the  
mist' —  
(Our old bright bird that still is veering  
there  
Above his four gold letters) 'and the  
light,'  
She said, 'was like that light' — and there  
she paused,  
And long; till I believing that the girl's  
Lean fancy, groping for it, could not  
find  
One likeness, laugh'd a little and found  
her two —  
'A warrior's crest above the cloud of  
war' —  
'A fiery phoenix rising from the smoke,  
The pyre he burnt in.' — 'Nay,' she said,  
'the light  
That glimmers on the marsh and on the  
grave.'  
And spoke no more, but turn'd and  
pass'd away.  
Miriam, I am not surely one of those  
Caught by the flower that closes on the  
fly,  
But after ten slow weeks her fix'd intent,  
In aiming at an all but hopeless mark  
To strike it, struck; I took, I left you  
there;  
I came, I went, was happier day by  
day;  
For Muriel nursed you with a mother's  
care;  
Till on that clear and heather-scented  
height  
The rounder cheek had brighten'd into  
bloom.  
She always came to meet me carrying  
you,

And all her talk was of the babe she  
loved;  
So, following her old pastime of the  
brook,  
She threw the fly for me; but oftener  
left  
That angling to the mother. 'Muriel's  
health  
Had weaken'd, nursing little Miriam.  
Strange!  
She used to shun the wailing babe, and  
dotes  
On this of yours.' But when the matron  
saw  
That hinted love was only wasted bait,  
Not risen to, she was bolder. 'Ever  
since  
You sent the fatal ring' — I told her  
'sent  
To Miriam,' 'Doubtless — ay, but ever,  
since  
In all the world my dear one sees but  
you —  
In your sweet babe she finds but you —  
she makes  
Her heart a mirror that reflects but you.'  
And then the tear fell, the voice broke.  
*Her heart!*  
I gazed into the mirror, as a man  
Who sees his face in water, and a stone,  
That glances from the bottom of the  
pool,  
Strike upward thro' the shadow; yet at  
last,  
Gratitude — loneliness — desire to keep  
So skilled a nurse about you always —  
nay!  
Some half remorseful kind of pity too —  
Well! well, you know I married Muriel  
Erne.  
'I take thee Muriel for my wedded  
wife' —  
I had forgotten it was your birthday,  
child —  
When all at once with some electric  
thrill  
A cold air pass'd between us, and the  
hands  
Fell from each other, and were join'd  
again.  
No second cloudless honeymoon was  
mine.  
For by and by she sicken'd of the farce,

She dropt the gracious mask of mother-  
hood,  
She came no more to meet me, carrying  
you,  
Nor ever cared to set you on her knee,  
Nor ever let you gambol in her sight,  
Nor ever cheer'd you with a kindly  
smile,  
Nor ever ceased to clamour for the ring;  
Why had I sent the ring at first to her?  
Why had I made her love me thro' the  
ring,  
And then had changed? so fickle are  
men — the best!  
Not she — but now my love was hers  
again,  
The ring by right, she said, was hers  
again.  
At times too shrilling in her angrier  
moods,  
'That weak and watery nature love you?  
No!  
'*Io t'amo, Io t'amo*!' flung herself  
Against my heart, but often while her  
lips  
Were warm upon my cheek, an icy  
breath,  
As from the grating of a sepulchre,  
Past over both. I told her of my vow,  
No pliable idiot I to break my vow;  
But still she made her outcry for the  
ring;  
For one monotonous fancy madden'd her,  
Till I myself was madden'd with her  
cry,  
And even that '*Io t'amo*,' those three  
sweet  
Italian words, became a weariness.  
My people too were scared with eerie  
sounds,  
A footstep, a low throbbing in the walls,  
A noise of falling weights that never  
fell,  
Weird whispers, bells that rang without  
a hand,  
Door-handles turn'd when none was at  
the door,  
And bolted doors that open'd of them-  
selves:  
And one betwixt the dark and light had  
seen  
*Her*, bending by the cradle of her  
babe.

*Miriam*. And I remember once that  
being waked  
By noises in the house — and no one  
near —  
I cried for nurse, and felt a gentle hand  
Fall on my forehead, and a sudden face  
Look'd in upon me like a gleam and  
pass'd  
And I was quieted, and slept again.  
Or is it some half memory of a dream?  
*Father*. Your fifth September birth-  
day.  
*Miriam*. And the face,  
The hand, — my Mother.  
*Father*. *Miriam*, on that day  
Two lovers parted by no scurrilous tale —  
Mere want of gold — and still for twenty  
years  
Bound by the golden cord of their first  
love —  
Had ask'd us to their marriage, and to  
share  
Their marriage-banquet. *Muriel*, paler  
than  
Than ever you were in your cradle,  
moan'd,  
'I am fitter for my bed, or for my grave,  
I cannot go, go you.' And then she  
rose,  
She clung to me with such a hard em-  
brace,  
So lingeringly long, that half-amazed  
I parted from her, and I went alone.  
And when the bridegroom murmur'd,  
'With this ring,'  
I felt for what I could not find, the key,  
The guardian of her relics, of *her* ring.  
I kept it as a sacred amulet  
About me, — gone! and gone in that  
embrace!  
Then, hurrying home, I found her not  
in house  
Or garden — up the tower — an icy air  
Fled by me. — There, the chest was open  
— all  
The sacred relics tost about the floor —  
Among them *Muriel* lying on her face —  
I raised her, call'd her, '*Muriel, Muriel*,  
wake!'  
The fatal ring lay near her; the glazed  
eye  
Glared at me as in horror. Dead! I  
took



And chafed the freezing hand. A red  
mark ran  
All round one finger pointed straight,  
the rest  
Were crumpled inwards. Dead!—and  
maybe stung  
With some remorse, had stolen, worn the  
ring—  
Then torn it from her finger, or as if—  
For never had I seen her show remorse—  
As if—

*Miriam.* — those two Ghost Lovers—

*Father.* — lovers yet—

*Miriam.* Yes, yes!

*Father.* — but dead so long, gone up  
so far,

That now their ever-rising life has  
dwarf'd

Or lost the moment of their past on  
earth,

As we forget our wail at being born.

As if—

*Miriam.* — a dearer ghost had—

*Father.* — wrench'd it away.

*Miriam.* Had floated in with sad  
reproachful eyes,

Till from her own hand she had torn the  
ring

In fright, and fallen dead. And I my-  
self

Am half afraid to wear it.

*Father.* Well, no more!

No bridal music this! but fear not you!

You have the ring she guarded; that  
poor link

With earth is broken, and has left her  
free,

Except that, still drawn downward for  
an hour,

Her spirit hovering by the church, where  
she

Was married too, may linger, till she  
sees

Her maiden coming like a Queen, who  
leaves

Some colder province in the North to  
gain

Her capital city, where the loyal bells  
Clash welcome—linger, till her own, the  
babe

She lean'd to from her Spiritual sphere,  
Her lonely maiden-Princess, crown'd with

flowers,

Has enter'd on the larger woman-world  
Of wives and mothers.

But the bridal veil—  
Your nurse is waiting. Kiss me, child,  
and go.

## FORLORN.

## I.

'HE is fled— I wish him dead—  
He that wrought my ruin—  
O the flattery and the craft  
Which were my undoing . . .  
In the night, in the night,  
When the storms are blowing.'

## II.

'Who was witness of the crime?  
Who shall now reveal it?  
He is fled, or he is dead,  
Marriage will conceal it . . .  
In the night, in the night,  
While the gloom is growing.'

## III.

Catherine, Catherine, in the night,  
What is this you're dreaming?  
There is laughter down in Hell  
At your simple scheming . . .  
In the night, in the night,  
When the ghosts are fleeing.

## IV.

You to place a hand in his  
Like an honest woman's,  
You that lie with wasted lungs  
Waiting for your summons . . .  
In the night, O the night,  
O the deathwatch beating!

## V.

There will come a witness soon  
Hard to be confuted,  
All the world will hear a voice  
Scream you are polluted . . .  
In the night, O the night,  
When the owls are wailing!

## VI.

Shame and marriage, Shame and marriage,  
 Fright and foul dissembling,  
 Bantering bridesman, reddening priest,  
 Tower and altar trembling . . .  
 In the night, O the night,  
 When the mind is failing!

## VII.

Mother, dare you kill your child?  
 How your hand is shaking!  
 Daughter of the seed of Cain,  
 What is this you're taking? . . .  
 In the night, O the night,  
 While the house is sleeping.

## VIII.

Dreadful! has it come to this,  
 O unhappy creature?  
 You that would not tread on a worm  
 For your gentle nature . . .  
 In the night, O the night,  
 O the night of weeping!

## IX.

Murder would not veil your sin,  
 Marriage will not hide it,  
 Earth and Hell will brand your name  
 Wretch you must abide it . . .  
 In the night, O the night,  
 Long before the dawning.

## X.

Up, get up, and tell him all,  
 Tell him you were lying!  
 Do not die with a lie in your mouth,  
 You that know you're dying . . .  
 In the night, O the night,  
 While the grave is yawning.

## XI.

No—you will not die before,  
 Tho' you'll ne'er be stronger;  
 You will live till *that* is born,  
 Then a little longer . . .  
 In the night, O the night,  
 While the Fiend is prowling.

## XII.

Death and marriage, Death and marriage!  
 Funeral hearses rolling!  
 Black with bridal favours mixt!  
 Bridal bells with tolling! . . .  
 In the night, O the night,  
 When the wolves are howling.

## XIII.

Up, get up, the time is short,  
 Tell him now or never!  
 Tell him all before you die,  
 Lest you die for ever . . .  
 In the night, O the night,  
 Where there's no forgetting.

## XIV.

Up she got, and wrote him all,  
 All her tale of sadness,  
 Blister'd every word with tears,  
 And eased her heart of madness . . .  
 In the night, and nigh the dawn,  
 And while the moon was setting.

## HAPPY.

## THE LEPER'S BRIDE.

## I.

WHY wail you, pretty plover? and what  
 is it that you fear?  
 Is he sick your mate like mine? have  
 you lost him, is he fled?  
 And there—the heron rises from his  
 watch beside the mere,  
 And flies above the leper's hut, where  
 lives the living-dead.

## II.

Come back, nor let me know it! would  
 he live and die alone?  
 And has he not forgiven me yet, his  
 over-jealous bride,  
 Who am, and was, and will be his, his  
 own and only own,  
 To share his living death with him,  
 die with him side by side?

## III.

Is that the leper's hut on the solitary  
moor,  
Where noble Ulric dwells forlorn, and  
wears the leper's weed?  
The door is open. He! is he standing  
at the door,  
My soldier of the Cross? it is he and  
he indeed!

## IV.

My roses — will he take them *now* —  
mine, his — from off the tree  
We planted both together, happy in  
our marriage morn?  
O God, I could blaspheme, for he fought  
Thy fight for Thee,  
And Thou hast made him leper to compass  
him with scorn —

## V.

Hast spared the flesh of thousands, the  
coward and the base,  
And set a crueller mark than Cain's on  
him, the good and brave!  
He sees me, waves me from him. I will  
front him face to face.  
You need not wave me from you. I  
would leap into your grave.

\* \* \* \*

## VI.

My warrior of the Holy Cross and of the  
conquering sword,  
The roses that you cast aside — once  
more I bring you these.  
No nearer? do you scorn me when you  
tell me, O my lord,  
You would not mar the beauty of your  
bride with your disease.

## VII.

You say your body is so foul — then here  
I stand apart,  
Who yearn to lay my loving head upon  
your leprous breast.  
The leper plague may scale my skin but  
never taint my heart;  
Your body is not foul to me, and body  
is foul at best.

## VIII.

I loved you first when young and fair,  
but now I love you most;  
The fairest flesh at last is filth on which  
the worm will feast;  
This poor rib-grated dungeon of the holy  
human ghost,  
This house with all its hateful needs no  
cleaner than the beast,

## IX.

This coarse diseaseful creature which in  
Eden was divine,  
This Satan-haunted ruin, this little  
city of sewers,  
This wall of solid flesh that comes between  
your soul and mine,  
Will vanish and give place to the  
beauty that endures,

## X.

The beauty that endures on the Spiritual  
height,  
When we shall stand transfigured, like  
Christ on Hermon hill,  
And moving each to music, soul in soul  
and light in light,  
Shall flash thro' one another in a  
moment as we will.

## XI.

Foul! foul! the word was yours not  
mine, I worship that right hand  
Which fell'd the foes before you as the  
woodman fells the wood,  
And sway'd the sword that lighten'd back  
the sun of Holy land,  
And clove the Moslem crescent moon,  
and changed it into blood.

## XII.

And once I worshipt all too well this  
creature of decay,  
For Age will chink the face, and Death  
will freeze the supplest limbs —  
Yet you in your mid manhood — O the  
grief when yesterday  
They bore the Cross before you to the  
chant of funeral hymns.

## XIII.

'Libera me, Domine!' you sang the  
Psalm, and when  
The Priest pronounced you dead, and  
flung the mould upon your feet,  
A beauty came upon your face, not that  
of living men,  
But seen upon the silent brow when  
life has ceased to beat.

## XIV.

'Libera nos, Domine'—you knew not  
one was there  
Who saw you kneel beside your bier,  
and weeping scarce could see;  
May I come a little nearer, I that heard,  
and changed the prayer  
And sang the married 'nos' for the  
solitary 'me.'

## XV.

*My* beauty marred by you? by you! so  
be it. All is well  
If I lose it and myself in the higher  
beauty, yours.  
*My* beauty lured that falcon from his  
eyry on the fell,  
Who never caught one gleam of the  
beauty which endures—

## XVI.

The Count who sought to snap the bond  
that link'd us life to life,  
Who whisper'd me, 'Your Ulric loves'  
—a little nearer still—  
He hiss'd, 'Let us revenge ourselves,  
your Ulric woos my wife'—  
A lie by which he thought he could  
subdue me to his will.

## XVII.

I knew that you were near me when I  
let him kiss my brow;  
*Did* he touch me on the lips? I was  
jealous, anger'd, vain,  
And I meant to make *you* jealous. Are  
you jealous of me now?  
Your pardon, O my love, if I ever gave  
you pain.

## XVIII.

You never once accused me, but I wept  
alone, and sigh'd  
In the winter of the Present for the  
summer of the Past;  
That icy winter silence—how it froze  
you from your bride,  
Tho' I made one barren effort to break  
it at the last.

## XIX.

I brought you, you remember, these roses,  
when I knew  
You were parting for the war, and you  
took them tho' you frown'd;  
You frown'd and yet you kiss'd them.  
All at once the trumpet blew,  
And you spurr'd your fiery horse, and  
you hurl'd them to the ground.

## XX.

You parted for the Holy War without a  
word to me,  
And clear myself unask'd—not I. My  
nature was too proud.  
And him I saw but once again, and far  
away was he,  
When I was praying in a storm—the  
crash was long and loud—

## XXI.

That God would ever slant His bolt from  
falling on your head—  
Then I lifted up my eyes, he was coming  
down the fell—  
I clapt my hands. The sudden fire from  
Heaven had dash'd him dead,  
And sent him charr'd and blasted to  
the deathless fire of Hell.

## XXII.

See, I sinn'd but for a moment. I re-  
pent-ed and repent,  
And trust myself forgiven by the God  
to whom I kneel.  
A little nearer? Yes. I shall hardly be  
content  
Till I be leper like yourself, my love,  
from head to heel.

## XXIII.

O foolish dreams, that you, that I, would  
slight our marriage oath:

I held you at that moment even dearer  
than before;

Now God has made you leper in His  
loving care for both,

That we might cling together, never  
doubt each other more.

## XXIV.

The Priest, who join'd you to the dead,  
has join'd our hands of old;

If man and wife be but one flesh, let  
mine be leprous too,

As dead from all the human race as if  
beneath the mould;

If you be dead, then I am dead, who  
only live for you.

## XXV.

Would Earth tho' hid in cloud not be  
follow'd by the Moon?

The leech forsake the dying bed for  
terror of his life?

The shadow leave the Substance in the  
brooding light of noon?

Or if I had been the leper would you  
have left the wife?

## XXVI.

Not take them! Still you wave me off  
— poor roses — must I go —

I have worn them year by year — from  
the bush we both had set —

What? fling them to you? — well — that  
were hardly gracious. No!

Your plague but passes by the touch,  
A little nearer yet!

## XXVII.

There, there! he buried you, the Priest;  
the Priest is not to blame,

He joins us once again, to his either  
office true:

I thank him. I am happy, happy.  
Kiss me. In the name

Of the everlasting God, I will live and  
die with you,

[DEAN MILMAN has remarked that the protection and care afforded by the Church to this blighted race of lepers was among the most beautiful of its offices during the Middle Ages. The leprosy of the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries was supposed to be a legacy of the crusades, but was in all probability the offspring of meagre and unwholesome diet, miserable lodging and clothing, physical and moral degradation. The services of the Church in the seclusion of these unhappy sufferers were most affecting. The stern duty of looking to the public welfare is tempered with exquisite compassion for the victims of this loathsome disease. The ritual for the sequestration of the leprous differed little from the burial service. After the leper had been sprinkled with holy water, the priest conducted him into the church, the leper singing the psalm 'Libera me domine,' and the crucifix and bearer going before. In the church a black cloth was stretched over two trestles in front of the altar, and the leper leaning at its side devoutly heard mass. The priest, taking up a little earth in his cloak, threw it on one of the leper's feet, and put him out of the church, if it did not rain too heavily; took him to his hut in the midst of the fields, and then uttered the prohibitions: 'I forbid you entering the church . . . or entering the company of others. I forbid you quitting your home without your leper's dress.' He concluded: 'Take this dress, and wear it in token of humility; take these gloves, take this clapper, as a sign that you are forbidden to speak to any one. You are not to be indignant at being thus separated from others, and as to your little wants, good people will provide for you, and God will not desert you.' Then in this old ritual follow these sad words: 'When it shall come to pass that the leper shall pass out of this world, he shall be buried in his hut, and not in the churchyard.' At first there was a doubt whether wives should follow their husbands who had been leprous, or remain in the world and marry again. The Church decided that the marriage-tie was indissoluble, and so bestowed on these unhappy beings this immense source of consolation. With a love stronger than this living death, lepers were followed into banishment from the haunts of men by their faithful wives. Readers of Sir J. Stephen's *Essays on Ecclesiastical Biography* will recollect the description of the founder of the Franciscan order, how, controlling his involuntary disgust, St. Francis of Assisi washed the feet and dressed the sores of the lepers, once at least reverently applying his lips to their wounds. — BOUCHER-JAMES.]

This ceremony of *quasi*-burial varied considerably at different times and in different places.

In some cases a grave was dug, and the leper's face was often covered during the service.

TO ULYSSES.<sup>1</sup>

## I.

ULYSSES, much-experienced man,  
Whose eyes have known this globe of ours,  
Her tribes of men, and trees, and flowers,  
From Corrientes to Japan,

## II.

To you that bask below the Line,  
I soaking here in winter wet —  
The century's three strong eights have met  
To drag me down to seventy-nine

## III.

In summer if I reach my day —  
To you, yet young, who breathe the balm  
Of summer-winters by the palm  
And orange grove of Paraguay,

## IV.

I tolerant of the colder time,  
Who love the winter woods, to trace  
On paler heavens the branching grace  
Of leafless elm, or naked lime,

## V.

And see my cedar green, and there  
My giant ilex keeping leaf  
When frost is keen and days are brief —  
Or marvel how in English air

## VI.

My yucca, which no winter quells,  
Altho' the months have scarce begun,  
Has push'd toward our faintest sun  
A spike of half-accomplish'd bells —

## VII.

Or watch the waving pine which here  
The warrior of Caprera set,<sup>2</sup>

A name that earth will not forget  
Till earth has roll'd her latest year —

## VIII.

I, once half-crazed for larger light  
On broader zones beyond the foam,  
But chaining fancy now at home  
Among the quarried downs of Wight,

## IX.

Not less would yield full thanks to you  
For your rich gift, your tale of lands  
I know not,<sup>3</sup> your Arabian sands;  
Your cane, your palm, tree-fern, bambo

## X.

The wealth of tropic bower and brake;  
Your Oriental Eden-isles,<sup>4</sup>  
Where man, nor only Nature smiles;  
Your wonder of the boiling lake;<sup>5</sup>

## XI.

Phra-Chai, the Shadow of the Best,<sup>6</sup>  
Phra-bat<sup>7</sup> the step; your Pontic coast;  
Crag-cloister; <sup>8</sup> Anatolian Ghost;<sup>9</sup>  
Hong-Kong,<sup>10</sup> Karnac,<sup>11</sup> and all the rest.

## XII.

Thro' which I follow'd line by line  
Your leading hand, and came, my friend,  
To prize your various book, and send  
A gift of slenderer value, mine.

<sup>1</sup> 'Ulysses,' the title of a number of essays by W. G. Palgrave. He died at Monte Video before seeing my poem.

<sup>2</sup> Garibaldi said to me, alluding to his barren island, 'I wish I had your trees.'

<sup>3</sup> The tale of Nejd.

<sup>4</sup> The Philippines.

<sup>5</sup> In Dominica.

<sup>6</sup> The Shadow of the Lord. Certain obscure markings on a rock in Siam, which express the image of Buddha to the Buddhist more or less distinctly according to his faith and his moral worth.

<sup>7</sup> The footstep of the Lord on another rock.

<sup>8</sup> The monastery of Sumelas.

<sup>9</sup> Anatolian Spectre stories.

<sup>10</sup> The Three Cities.

<sup>11</sup> Travels in Egypt.



## TO MARY BOYLE.

WITH THE FOLLOWING POEM.

## I.

'SPRING-FLOWERS'! While you still  
 delay to take  
 Your leave of Town,  
 Our elmtree's ruddy-hearted blossom-  
 flake  
 Is fluttering down.

## II.

Be truer to your promise. There! I  
 heard  
 Our cuckoo call.  
 Be needle to the magnet of your word,  
 Nor wait, till all

## III.

Our vernal bloom from every vale and  
 plain  
 And garden pass,  
 And all the gold from each laburnum  
 chain  
 Drop to the grass.

## IV.

Is memory with your Marian gone to-  
 rest,  
 Dead with the dead?  
 For ere she left us, when we met, you  
 prest  
 My hand, and said

## V.

'I come with your spring-flowers.' You  
 came not, friend;  
 My birds would sing,  
 You heard not. Take then this spring-  
 flower I send,  
 This song of spring,

## VI.

Found yesterday—forgotten mine own  
 rhyme  
 By mine old self,  
 As I shall be forgotten by old Time,  
 Laid on the shelf—

## VII.

A rhyme that flower'd betwixt the whiten-  
 ing sloe  
 And kingcup blaze,  
 And more than half a hundred years ago,  
 In rick-fire days,

## VIII.

When Dives loathed the times, and paced  
 his land  
 In fear of worse,  
 And sanguine Lazarus felt a vacant hand  
 Fill with *his* purse.

## IX.

For lowly minds were madden'd to the  
 height  
 By tongueter tricks,  
 And once—I well remember that red  
 night  
 When thirty ricks,

## X.

All flaming, made an English homestead  
 Hell—  
 These hands of mine  
 Have helpt to pass a bucket from the well  
 Along the line,

## XI.

When this bare dome had not begun to  
 gleam  
 Thro' youthful curls,  
 And you were then a lover's fairy dream,  
 His girl of girls;

## XII.

And you, that now are lonely, and with  
 Grief  
 Sit face to face,  
 Might find a flickering glimmer of relief  
 In change of place.

## XIII.

What use to brood? this life of mingled  
 pains  
 And joys to me,  
 Despite of every Faith and Creed, remains  
 The Mystery.

## XIV.

Let golden youth bewail the friend, the  
 wife,  
 For ever gone.  
 He dreams of that long walk thro' desert  
 life  
 Without the one.

## XV.

The silver year should cease to mourn  
 and sigh —  
 Not long to wait —  
 So close are we, dear Mary, you and I  
 To that dim gate.

## XVI.

Take, read! and be the faults your Poet  
 makes  
 Or many or few,  
 He rests content, if his young music  
 wakes  
 A wish in you

## XVII.

To change our dark Queen-city, all her  
 realm  
 Of sound and smoke,  
 For his clear heaven, and these few lanes  
 of elm  
 And whispering oak.

## THE PROGRESS OF SPRING.

## I.

THE groundflame of the crocus breaks  
 the mould,  
 Fair Spring slides hither o'er the  
 Southern sea,  
 Wavers on her thin stem the snowdrop  
 cold  
 That trembles not to kisses of the  
 bee:  
 Come, Spring, for now from all the  
 dripping eaves  
 The spear of ice has wept itself away,  
 And hour by hour unfolding woodbine  
 leaves  
 O'er his uncertain shadow droops the  
 day.

She comes! The loosen'd rivulets run;  
 The frost-bead melts upon her golden  
 hair;  
 Her mantle, slowly greening in the Sun,  
 Now wraps her close, now arching  
 leaves her bare  
 To breaths of balmier air;

## II.

Up leaps the lark, gone wild to welcome  
 her,  
 About her glance the tits, and shriek  
 the jays,  
 Before her skims the jubilant woodpecker,  
 The linnet's bosom blushes at her gaze,  
 While round her brows a woodland culver  
 flits,  
 Watching her large light eyes and  
 gracious looks,  
 And in her open palm a halcyon sits  
 Patient — the secret splendour of the  
 brooks.  
 Come, Spring! She comes on waste and  
 wood,  
 On farm and field: but enter also here,  
 Diffuse thyself at will thro' all my blood,  
 And, tho' thy violet sicken into sere,  
 Lodge with me all the year!

## III.

Once more a downy drift against the  
 brakes,  
 Self-darken'd in the sky, descending  
 slow!  
 But gladly see I thro' the wavering flakes  
 Yon blanching apricot like snow in  
 snow.  
 These will thine eyes not brook in forest-  
 paths,  
 On their perpetual pine, nor round  
 the beech;  
 They fuse themselves to little spicy baths,  
 Solved in the tender blushes of the  
 peach;  
 They lose themselves and die  
 On that new life that gems the haw-  
 thorn line;  
 Thy gay lent-lilies wave and put them by,  
 And out once more in varnish'd glory  
 shine  
 Thy stars of celandine.

## IV.

She floats across the hamlet. Heaven  
 lours,  
 But in the tearful splendour of her  
 smiles  
 I see the slowly-thickening chestnut  
 towers  
 Fill out the spaces by the barren tiles.  
 Now past her feet the swallow circling flies,  
 A clamorous cuckoo stoops to meet  
 her hand;  
 Her light makes rainbows in my closing  
 eyes,  
 I hear a charm of song thro' all the  
 land.  
 Come, Spring! She comes, and Earth  
 is glad  
 To roll her North below thy deepening  
 dome,  
 But ere thy maiden birk be wholly clad,  
 And these low bushes dip their twigs  
 in foam,  
 Make all true hearths thy home.

## V.

Across my garden! and the thicket stirs,  
 The fountain pulses high in sunnier jets,  
 The blackcap warbles, and the turtle purrs,  
 The starling claps his tiny castanets.  
 Still round her forehead wheels the  
 woodland dove,  
 And scatters on her throat the sparks  
 of dew,  
 The kingcup fills her footprint, and above  
 Broaden the glowing isles of vernal  
 blue.  
 Hail ample presence of a Queen,  
 Bountiful, beautiful, apparell'd gay,  
 Whose mantle, every shade of glancing  
 green,  
 Flies back in fragrant breezes to display  
 A tunic white as May!

## VI.

She whispers, 'From the South I bring  
 you balm,  
 For on a tropic mountain was I born,  
 While some dark dweller by the coco-  
 palm  
 Watch'd my far meadow zoned with  
 airy morn;

From under rose a muffled moan of  
 floods;  
 I sat beneath a solitude of snow;  
 There no one came, the turf was fresh,  
 the woods  
 Plunged gulf on gulf thro' all their  
 vales below.  
 I saw beyond their silent tops  
 The steaming marshes of the scarlet  
 cranes,  
 The slant seas leaning on the mangrove  
 copse,  
 And summer basking in the sultry  
 plains  
 About a land of canes;

## VII.

'Then from my vapour-girdle soaring  
 forth  
 I scaled the buoyant highway of the  
 birds,  
 And drank the dews and drizzle of the  
 North,  
 That I might mix with men, and hear  
 their words  
 On pathway'd plains; for—while my  
 hand exults  
 Within the bloodless heart of lowly  
 flowers  
 To work old laws of Love to fresh  
 results,  
 Thro' manifold effect of simple powers—  
 I too would teach the man  
 Beyond the darker hour to see the  
 bright,  
 That his fresh life may close as it began,  
 The still-fulfilling promise of a light  
 Narrowing the bounds of night.'

## VIII.

So wed thee with my soul, that I may  
 mark  
 The coming year's great good and  
 varied ills,  
 And new developments, whatever spark  
 Be struck from out the clash of warring  
 wills;  
 Or whether, since our nature cannot rest,  
 The smoke of war's volcano burst  
 again  
 From hoary deeps that belt the changeful  
 West,

Old Empires, dwellings of the kings  
 of men;  
 Or should those fail, that hold the helm,  
 While the long day of knowledge  
 grows and warms,  
 And in the heart of this most ancient  
 realm  
 A hateful voice be utter'd and alarms  
 Sounding 'To arms! to arms!'

## IX.

A simpler, saner lesson might he learn  
 Who reads thy gradual process, Holy  
 Spring.  
 Thy leaves possess the season in their  
 turn,  
 And in their time thy warblers rise on  
 wing.  
 How surely glidest thou from March to  
 May,  
 And changest, breathing it, the sullen  
 wind,  
 Thy scope of operation, day by day,  
 Larger and fuller, like the human mind!  
 Thy warmths from bud to bud  
 Accomplish that blind model in the  
 seed,  
 And men have hopes, which race the  
 restless blood,  
 That after many changes may succeed  
 Life, which is Life indeed.

## MERLIN AND THE GLEAM.

## I.

O YOUNG Mariner,  
 You from the haven  
 Under the sea-cliff,  
 You that are watching  
 The gray Magician  
 With eyes of wonder,  
 / am Merlin,  
 And / am dying,  
 / am Merlin  
 Who follow The Gleam.

## II.

Mighty the Wizard  
 Who found me at sunrise  
 Sleeping, and woke me  
 And learn'd me Magic!

Great the Master,  
 And sweet the Magic,  
 When over the valley,  
 In early summers,  
 Over the mountain,  
 On human faces,  
 And all around me,  
 Moving to melody,  
 Floated The Gleam.

## III.

Once at the croak of a Raven  
 who crost it,  
 A barbarous people,  
 Blind to the magic,  
 And deaf to the melody,  
 Snarl'd at and cursed me.  
 A demon vext me,  
 The light retreated,  
 The landskip darken'd,  
 The melody deaden'd,  
 The Master whisper'd,  
 'Follow The Gleam.'

## IV.

Then to the melody,  
 Over a wilderness  
 Gliding, and glancing at  
 Elf of the woodland,  
 Gnome of the cavern,  
 Griffin and Giant,  
 And dancing of Fairies  
 In desolate hollows,  
 And wraiths of the mountain,  
 And rolling of dragons  
 By warble of water,  
 Or cataract music  
 Of falling torrents,  
 Flitted The Gleam.

## V.

Down from the mountain  
 And over the level,  
 And streaming and shining on  
 Silent river,  
 Silvery willow,  
 Pasture and plowland,  
 Innocent maidens,  
 Garrulous children,  
 Homestead and harvest,  
 Reaper and gleaner,  
 And rough-ruddy faces

Of lowly labour,  
Slided The Gleam —

## VI.

Then, with a melody  
Stronger and statelier,  
Led me at length  
To the city and palace  
Of Arthur the king;  
Touch'd at the golden  
Cross of the churches,  
Flash'd on the Tournament,  
Flicker'd and bicker'd  
From helmet to helmet,  
And last on the forehead  
Of Arthur the blameless  
Rested The Gleam.

## VII.

Clouds and darkness  
Closed upon Camelot;  
Arthur had vanish'd  
I knew not whither,  
The king who loved me,  
And cannot die;  
For out of the darkness  
Silent and slowly  
The Gleam, that had waned to a  
wintry glimmer  
On icy fallow  
And faded forest,  
Drew to the valley  
Named of the shadow,  
And slowly brightening  
Out of the glimmer,  
And slowly moving again to a  
melody  
Yearningly tender,  
Fell on the shadow,  
No longer a shadow,  
But clothed with The Gleam.

## VIII.

And broader and brighter  
The Gleam flying onward,  
Wed to the melody,  
Sang thro' the world;  
And slower and fainter,  
Old and weary,  
But eager to follow,  
I saw, whenever  
In passing it glanced upon

Hamlet or city,  
That under the Crosses  
The dead man's garden,  
The mortal hillock,  
Would break into blossom  
And so to the land's  
Last limit I came —  
And can no longer,  
But die rejoicing,  
For thro' the Magic  
Of Him the Mighty,  
Who taught me in childhood,  
There on the border  
Of boundless Ocean,  
And all but in Heaven  
Hovers The Gleam.

## IX.

Not of the sunlight,  
Not of the moonlight,  
Not of the starlight!  
O young Mariner,  
Down to the haven,  
Call your companions,  
Launch your vessel,  
And crowd your canvas,  
And, ere it vanishes  
Over the margin,  
After it, follow it,  
Follow The Gleam.

## ROMNEY'S REMORSE.

'I read Hayley's Life of Romney the other day — Romney wanted but education and reading to make him a very fine painter; but his ideal was not high nor fixed. How touching is the close of his life! He married at nineteen, and because Sir Joshua and others had said that "marriage spoils an artist" almost immediately left his wife in the North and scarce saw her till the end of his life; when old, nearly mad, and quite desolate, he went back to her and she received him and nursed him till he died. This quiet act of hers is worth all Romney's pictures! even as a matter of Art, I am sure.' (*Letters and Literary Remains of Edward Fitzgerald*, vol. i.)

'BEAT, little heart — I give you this and this,  
Who are you? What! the Lady  
Hamilton?

Good, I am never weary painting you.  
To sit once more? Cassandra, Hebe,  
Joan,  
Or spinning at your wheel beside the  
vine —

Bacchante, what you will; and if I fail  
To conjure and concentrate into form  
And colour all you are, the fault is less  
In me than Art. What Artist ever yet  
Could make pure light live on the canvas?  
Art!

Why should I so disrelish that short  
word?

Where am I? snow on all the hills!  
so hot,  
So fever'd! never colt would more de-  
light

To roll himself in meadow grass than I  
To wallow in that winter of the hills.

Nurse, were you hired? or came of  
your own will

To wait on one so broken, so forlorn?  
Have I not met you somewhere long ago?  
I am all but sure I have — in Kendal  
church —

O yes! I hired you for a season there,  
And then we parted; but you look so  
kind

That you will not deny my sultry throat  
One draught of icy water. There — you  
spill

The drops upon my forehead. Your  
hand shakes.

I am ashamed. I am a trouble to you,  
Could kneel for your forgiveness. Are  
they tears?

For me — they do me too much grace —  
for me?

O Mary, Mary!

Vexing you with words!  
Words only, horn of fever, or the fumes  
Of that dark opiate dose you gave me,  
— words,

Wild babble. I have stumbled back again  
Into the common day, the sounder self.  
God stay me there, if only for your sake,  
The truest, kindest, noblest-hearted wife  
That ever wore a Christian marriage-ring.

My curse upon the Master's apothegm,  
That wife and children drag an Artist  
down!

This seem'd my lodestar in the Heaven  
of Art,

And lured me from the household fire on  
earth.

To you my days have been a life-long lie,  
Grafted on half a truth; and tho' you say  
'Take comfort, you have won the Painter's  
fame,'

The best in me that sees the worst in me,  
And groans to see it, finds no comfort  
there.

What fame? I am not Raphaël,  
Titian — no

Nor even a Sir Joshua, some will cry.  
Wrong there! The painter's fame? but  
mine, that grew

Blown into glittering by the popular  
breath,

May float awhile beneath the sun, may  
roll

The rainbow hues of heaven about it —  
There!

The colour'd bubble bursts above the  
abyss

Of Darkness, utter Lethe.

Is it so?

Her sad eyes plead for my own fame  
with me

To make it dearer.

Look, the sun has risen  
To flame along another dreary day.

Your hand. How bright you keep your  
marriage-ring!

Raise me. I thank you.

Has your opiate then  
Bred this black mood? or am I conscious,  
more

Than other Masters, of the chasm  
between

Work and Ideal? Or does the gloom  
of Age

And suffering cloud the height I stand  
upon

Even from myself? stand? stood . . .  
no more.

And yet  
The world would lose, if such a wife as  
you

Should vanish unrecorded. Might I crave  
One favour? I am bankrupt of all claim

On your obedience, and my strongest  
wish



Falls flat before your least unwillingness.  
Still would you — if it please you — sit  
to me?

I dream'd last night of that clear  
summer noon,  
When seated on a rock, and foot to foot  
With your own shadow in the placid lake,  
You claspt our infant daughter, heart to  
heart.

I had been among the hills, and brought  
you down

A length of staghorn-moss, and this you  
twined

About her cap. I see the picture yet,  
Mother and child. A sound from far away,  
No louder than a bee among the flowers,  
A fall of water lull'd the noon asleep.

You still'd it for the moment with a song  
Which often echo'd in me, while I stood  
Before the great Madonna-masterpieces  
Of ancient Art in Paris, or in Rome.

Mary, my crayons! if I can, I will.  
You should have been — I might have  
made you once,

Had I but known you as I know you  
now —

The true Alcestis of the time. Your  
song —

Sit, listen! I remember it, a proof  
That I — even I — at times remember'd  
*you.*

'Beat upon mine, little heart! beat,  
beat!

Beat upon mine! you are mine, my  
sweet!

All mine from your pretty blue eyes  
to your feet,

My sweet.'

Less profile! turn to me — three-quarter  
face.

'Sleep, little blossom, my honey, my  
bliss!

For I give you this, and I give you this!  
And I blind your pretty blue eyes with  
a kiss!

Sleep!'

Too early blinded by the kiss of death —

'Father and Mother will watch you  
grow' —

You watch'd not I, she did not grow,  
she died.

'Father and Mother will watch you  
grow,  
And gather the roses whenever they  
blow,  
And find the white heather wherever  
you go,

My sweet.'

Ah, my white heather only blooms in  
heaven

With Milton's amaranth. There, there,  
there! a child

Had shamed me at it — Down, you idle  
tools,

Stamp into dust — tremulous, all awry,  
Blurr'd like a landskip in a ruffled pool, —  
Not one stroke firm. This Art, that  
harlot-like

Seduced me from you, leaves me harlot-  
like,

Who love her still, and whimper, im-  
potent

To win her back before I die — and  
then —

Then, in the loud world's bastard judg-  
ment-day,

One truth will damn me with the mind-  
less mob,

Who feel no touch of my temptation, more  
Than all the myriad lies, that blacken round  
The corpse of every man that gains a  
name;

'This model husband, this fine Artist!'  
Fool,

What matters? Six foot deep of burial  
mould.

Will dull their comments! Ay, but when  
the shout

Of His descending peals from Heaven,  
and throbs

Thro' earth, and all her graves, if *He*  
should ask,

'Why left you wife and children? for  
my sake,

According to my word?' and I replied,  
'Nay, Lord, for *Art*, why, that would  
sound so mean

That all the dead, who wait the doom of  
Hell

For bolder sins than mine, adulteries,

Wife-murders, — nay, the ruthless Mussul-  
man  
Who flings his bowstrung Harem in the  
sea,  
Would turn, and glare at me, and point  
and jeer,  
And gibber at the worm, who, living,  
made  
The wife of wives a widow-bride, and lost  
Salvation for a sketch.

I am wild again!

The coals of fire you heap upon my head  
Have crazed me. Some one knocking  
there without?

No! Will my Indian brother come? to  
find

Me or my coffin? Should I know the  
man?

This worn-out Reason dying in her house  
May leave the windows blinded, and if so,  
Bid him farewell for me, and tell him —

Hope!

I hear a death-bed Angel whisper 'Hope.'  
'The miserable have no medicine  
But only 'Hope!' He said it . . . in  
the play.

His crime was of the senses; of the mind  
Mine; worse, cold, calculated.

Tell my son —

O let me lean my head upon your breast.  
'Beat little heart' on this fool brain of  
mine.

I once had friends — and many — none  
like you.

I love you more than when we married.  
Hope!

O yes, I hope, or fancy that, perhaps,  
Human forgiveness touches heaven, and  
thence —

For you forgive me, you are sure of that —  
Reflected, sends a light on the forgiven.

### PARNASSUS.

Exegi monumentum . . .

Quod non . . .

Possit diruere . . .

. . . innumerabilis

Annorum series et fuga temporum. — HORACE.

#### I.

WHAT be those crown'd forms high over  
the sacred fountain?

Bards, that the mighty Muses have raised  
to the heights of the mountain,  
And over the flight of the Ages! O  
Goddesses, help me up thither!  
Lightning may shrivel the laurel of  
Cæsar, but mine would not wither.  
Steep is the mountain, but you, you will  
help me to overcome it,  
And stand with my head in the zenith,  
and roll my voice from the summit,  
Sounding for ever and ever thro' Earth  
and her listening nations,  
And mix with the great Sphere-music of  
stars and of constellations.

#### II.

What be those two shapes high over the  
sacred fountain,  
Taller than all the Muses, and huger  
than all the mountain?  
On those two known peaks they stand  
ever spreading and heightening;  
Poet, that evergreen laurel is blasted by  
more than lightning!  
Look, in their deep double shadow the  
crown'd ones all disappearing!  
Sing like a bird and be happy, nor hope  
for a deathless hearing!  
'Sounding for ever and ever?' pass on!  
the sight confuses —  
These are Astronomy and Geology, ter-  
rible Muses!

#### III.

If the lips were touch'd with fire from off  
a pure Pierian altar,  
Tho' their music here be mortal need the  
singer greatly care?  
Other songs for other worlds! the fire  
within him would not falter;  
Let the golden Iliad vanish, Homer here  
is Homer there.

### BY AN EVOLUTIONIST.

THE Lord let the house of a brute to the  
soul of a man,  
And the man said, 'Am I your debtor?'  
And the Lord — 'Not yet: but make it  
as clean as you can,  
And then I will let you a better.'

I.

If my body come from brutes, my soul  
uncertain, or a fable,  
Why not bask amid the senses while  
the sun of morning shines,  
I, the finer brute rejoicing in my hounds,  
and in my stable,  
Youth and Health, and birth and  
wealth, and choice of women and  
of wines?

II.

What hast thou done for me, grim Old  
Age, save breaking my bones on  
the rack?  
Would I had past in the morning that  
looks so bright from afar!

OLD AGE.

Done for thee? starved the wild beast  
that was linkt with thee eighty  
years back.  
Less weight now for the ladder-of-  
heaven that hangs on a star.

I.

If my body come from brutes, tho'  
somewhat finer than their own,  
I am heir, and this my kingdom.  
Shall the royal voice be mute?  
No, but if the rebel subject seek to drag  
me from the throne,  
Hold the sceptre, Human Soul, and  
rule thy Province of the brute.

II.

I have climb'd to the snows of Age, and  
I gaze at a field in the Past,  
Where I sank with the body at times  
in the sloughs of a low desire,  
But I hear no yelp of the beast, and the  
Man is quiet at last  
As he stands on the heights of his life  
with a glimpse of a height that is  
higher.

FAR—FAR—AWAY.

(FOR MUSIC.)

WHAT sight so lured him thro' the fields  
he knew

As where earth's green stole into heaven's  
own hue,  
Far—far—away?

What sound was dearest in his native  
dells?

The mellow lin-lan-lone of evening bells  
Far—far—away.

What vague world-whisper, mystic pain  
or joy,

Thro' those three words would haunt him  
when a boy,

Far—far—away?

A whisper from his dawn of life? a  
breath

From some fair dawn beyond the doors  
of death

Far—far—away?

Far, far, how far? from o'er the gates of  
Birth,

The faint horizons, all the bounds of  
earth,

Far—far—away?

What charm in words, a charm no words  
could give?

O dying words, can Music make you live  
Far—far—away?

POLITICS.

WE move, the wheel must always move,  
Nor always on the plain,

And if we move to such a goal  
As Wisdom hopes to gain,

Then you that drive, and know your Craft,  
Will firmly hold the rein,

Nor lend an ear to random cries,

Or you may drive in vain,  
For some cry 'Quick' and some cry  
'Slow,'

But, while the hills remain,  
Up hill 'Too-slow' will need the whip,  
Down hill 'Too-quick,' the chain.

BEAUTIFUL CITY.

BEAUTIFUL city, the centre and crater of  
European confusion,

O you with your passionate shriek for  
the rights of an equal humanity,

How often your Re-volution has proven  
but E-volution  
Roll'd again back on itself in the tides of  
a civic insanity!

#### THE ROSES ON THE TERRACE.

ROSE, on this terrace fifty years ago,  
When I was in my June, you in your  
May,  
Two words, 'My Rose' set all your face  
aglow,  
And now that I am white, and you are  
gray,  
That blush of fifty years ago, my dear,  
Blooms in the Past, but close to me  
to-day  
As this red rose, which on our terrace here  
Glow in the blue of fifty miles away.

#### THE PLAY.

ACT first, this Earth, a stage so gloom'd  
with woe  
You all but sicken at the shifting  
scenes.  
And yet be patient. Our Playwright  
may show  
In some fifth Act what this wild Drama  
means.

#### ON ONE WHO AFFECTED AN EFFEMINATE MANNER.

WHILE man and woman still are incom-  
plete,  
I prize that soul where man and woman  
meet,  
Which types all Nature's male and female  
plan,  
But, friend, man-woman is not woman-  
man.

#### TO ONE WHO RAN DOWN THE ENGLISH.

YOU make our faults too gross, and thence  
maintain  
Our darker future. May your fears be  
vain!

At times the small black fly upon the  
pane  
May seem the black ox of the distant  
plain.

#### THE SNOWDROP.

MANY, many welcomes  
February fair-maid,  
Ever as of old time,  
Solitary firstling,  
Coming in the cold time,  
Prophet of the gay time,  
Prophet of the May time,  
Prophet of the roses,  
Many, many welcomes  
February fair-maid!

#### THE THROSTLE.

'SUMMER is coming, summer is coming.  
I know it, I know it, I know it.  
Light again, leaf again, life again, love  
again,'  
Yes, my wild little Poet.

Sing the new year in under the blue.  
Last year you sang it as gladly.  
'New, new, new, new!' Is it then so  
new  
That you should carol so madly?

'Love again, song again, nest again, young  
again,'  
Never a prophet so crazy!  
And hardly a daisy as yet, little friend,  
See, there is hardly a daisy.

'Here again, here, here, here, happy  
year!'  
O warble unhidden, unbidden!  
Summer is coming, is coming, my dear,  
And all the winters are hidden.

#### THE OAK.

LIVE thy Life,  
Young and old,  
Like yon oak,  
Bright in spring,  
Living gold;

Summer-rich  
Then; and then  
Autumn-changed,  
Soberer-hued  
Gold again.

All his leaves  
Fall'n at length,  
Look, he stands,  
Trunk and bough,  
Naked strength.

## IN MEMORIAM.

W. G. WARD.

FAREWELL, whose like on earth I shall  
not find,  
Whose Faith and Work were bells of  
full accord,  
My friend, the most unworldly of man-  
kind,  
Most generous of all Ultramontanes,  
Ward,  
How subtle at tierce and quart of mind  
with mind,  
How loyal in the following of thy  
Lord!

# THE FORESTERS.\*

ACT I.—SCENE I., THE BOND; SCENES II., III., THE OUTLAWRY.

## ACT I.

SCENE I.—THE GARDEN BEFORE SIR RICHARD LEA'S CASTLE.

*Kate (gathering flowers).* These roses for my Lady Marian; these lilies to lighten Sir Richard's black room, where he sits and eats his heart for want of money to pay the Abbot.

[*Sings.*

The warrior Earl of Allendale,  
He loved the Lady Anne;  
The lady loved the master well,  
The maid she loved the man.

All in the castle garden,  
Or ever the day began,  
The lady gave a rose to the Earl,  
The maid a rose to the man.

'I go to fight in Scotland  
With many a savage clan;'  
The lady gave her hand to the Earl,  
The maid her hand to the man.

'Farewell, farewell, my warrior Earl!'  
And ever a tear down ran,  
She gave a weeping kiss to the Earl,  
And the maid a kiss to the man.

*Enter four ragged RETAINERS.*

*First Retainer.* You do well, Mistress Kate, to sing and to gather roses. You be fed with tit-bits, you, and we be dogs that have only the bones, till we be only bones our own selves.

*Second Retainer.* I am fed with tit-bits no more than you are, but I keep a good heart and make the most of it, and, truth to say, Sir Richard and my Lady Marian fare wellnigh as sparely as their people.

*Third Retainer.* And look at our suits, out at knee, out at elbow. We be more like scarecrows in a field than decent serving men; and then, I pray you, look at Robin Earl of Huntingdon's men.

*First Retainer.* She hath looked well at one of 'em, Little John.

*Third Retainer.* Ay, how fine they

be in their liveries, and each of 'em as full of meat as an egg, and as sleek and as round-about as a mellow codlin.

*Fourth Retainer.* But I be worse off than any of you, for I be lean by nature, and if you cram me crop-full I be little better than Famine in the picture, but if you starve me I be Gaffer Death himself. I would like to show you, Mistress Kate, how bare and spare I be on the rib: I be lanker than an old horse turned out to die on the common.

*Kate.* Spare me thy spare ribs, I pray thee; but now I ask you all, did none of you love young Walter Lea?

*First Retainer.* Ay, if he had not gone to fight the king's battles, we should have better battels at home.

*Kate.* Right as an Oxford scholar, but the boy was taken prisoner by the Moors.

*First Retainer.* Ay.

*Kate.* And Sir Richard was told he might be ransomed for two thousand marks in gold.

*First Retainer.* Ay.

*Kate.* Then he borrowed the monies from the Abbot of York, the Sheriff's brother. And if they be not paid back at the end of the year, the land goes to the Abbot.

*First Retainer.* No news of young Walter?

*Kate.* None, nor of the gold, nor the man who took out the gold: but now ye know why we live so stintedly, and why ye have so few grains to peck at. Sir Richard must scrape and scrape till he get to the land again. Come, come, why do you loiter here? Carry fresh rushes into the dining-hall, for those that are there they be so greasy and smell so vilely that my Lady Marian holds her nose when she steps across it.

*Fourth Retainer.* Why there, now! that very word 'greasy' hath a kind of unction in it, a smack of relish about it. The rats have gnawed 'em already. I pray Heaven we may not have to take to the rushes. [*Exeunt.*



*Kate.* Poor fellows!

The lady gave her hand to the Earl,  
The maid her hand to the man.

*Enter* LITTLE JOHN.

*Little John.* My master, Robin the Earl, is always a-telling us that every man, for the sake of the great blessed Mother in heaven, and for the love of his own little mother on earth, should handle all womankind gently, and hold them in all honour, and speak small to 'em, and not scare 'em, but go about to come at their love with all manner of homages, and observances, and circumbendibus.

*Kate.*

The lady gave a rose to the Earl,  
The maid a rose to the man.

*Little John (seeing her).* O the sacred little thing! What a shape! what lovely arms! A rose to the man! Ay, the man had given her a rose and she gave him another.

*Kate.* Shall I keep one little rose for Little John? No.

*Little John.* There, there! You see I was right. She hath a tenderness toward me, but is too shy to show it. It is in her, in the woman, and the man must bring it out of her.

*Kate.*

She gave a weeping kiss to the Earl,  
The maid a kiss to the man.

*Little John.* Did she? But there I am sure the ballad is at fault. It should have told us how the man first kissed the maid. She doesn't see me. Shall I be bold? shall I touch her? shall I give her the first kiss? O sweet Kate, my first love, the first kiss, the first kiss!

*Kate (turns and kisses him).* Why lookest thou so amazed?

*Little John.* I cannot tell; but I came to give thee the first kiss, and thou hast given it me.

*Kate.* But if a man and a maid care for one another, does it matter so much if the maid give the first kiss?

*Little John.* I cannot tell, but I had sooner have given thee the first kiss. I was dreaming of it all the way hither.

*Kate.* Dream of it, then, all the way back, for now I will have none of it.

*Little John.* Nay, now thou hast given me the man's kiss, let me give thee the maid's.

*Kate.* If thou draw one inch nearer, I will give thee a buffet on the face.

*Little John.* Wilt thou not give me rather the little rose for Little John?

*Kate (throws it down and tramples on it).* There!

[*Kate seeing Marian exit hurriedly.*]

*Enter* MARIAN (*singing*).

Love flew in at the window,  
As Wealth walk'd in at the door.  
'You have come for you saw Wealth coming,'  
said I.

But he flutter'd his wings with a sweet little cry,  
I'll cleave to you rich or poor.

Wealth dropt out of the window,  
Poverty crept thro' the door.  
'Well now you would fain follow Wealth,' said I,  
But he flutter'd his wings as he gave me the lie,  
I cling to you all the more.

*Little John.* Thanks, my lady—inasmuch as I am a true believer in true love myself, and your Ladyship hath sung the old proverb out of fashion.

*Marian.* Ay but thou hast ruffled my woman, Little John. She hath the fire in her face and the dew in her eyes. I believed thee to be too solemn and formal to be a ruffler. Out upon thee!

*Little John.* I am no ruffler, my lady; but I pray you, my lady, if a man and a maid love one another, may the maid give the first kiss?

*Marian.* It will be all the more gracious of her if she do.

*Little John.* I cannot tell. Manners be so corrupt, and these are the days of Prince John. [*Exit.*]

*Enter* SIR RICHARD LEA (*reading a bond*).

*Sir Richard.* Marian!

*Marian.* Father!

*Sir Richard.* Who parted from thee even now?

*Marian.* That strange starched stiff creature, Little John, the Earl's man. He would grapple with a lion like the King, and is flustered by a girl's kiss.

*Sir Richard.* There never was an Earl so true a friend of the people as Lord Robin of Huntingdon.

*Marian.* A gallant Earl. I love him as I hate John.

*Sir Richard.* I fear me he hath wasted his revenues in the service of our good King Richard against the party of John, as I have done, as I have done: and where is Richard?

*Marian.* Cleave to him, father! he will come home at last.

*Sir Richard.* I trust he will, but if he do not I and thou are but beggars.

*Marian.* We will be, beggar'd then and be true to the King.

*Sir Richard.* Thou speakest like a fool or a woman. Canst thou endure to be a beggar whose whole life hath been folded like a blossom in the sheath, like a careless sleeper in the down; who never hast felt a want, to whom all things, up to this present, have come as freely as heaven's air and mother's milk?

*Marian.* Tut, father! I am none of your delicate Norman maidens who can only broider and mayhap ride a-hawking with the help of the men. I can bake and I can brew, and by all the saints I can shoot almost as closely with the bow as the great Earl himself. I have played at the foils too with Kate: but is not to-day his birthday?

*Sir Richard.* Dost thou love him indeed, that thou keepest a record of his birthdays? Thou knowest that the Sheriff of Nottingham loves thee.

*Marian.* The Sheriff dare to love me? me who worship Robin the great Earl of Huntingdon? I love him as a damsel of his day might have loved Harold the Saxon, or Hereward the Wake. They both fought against the tyranny of the kings, the Normans. But then your Sheriff, your little man, if he dare to fight at all, would fight for his rents, his leases, his houses, his monies, his oxen, his dinners, himself. Now your great man, your Robin, all England's Robin, fights not for himself but for the people of England. This John—this Norman tyranny—the stream is bearing us all down, and our little Sheriff will ever swim with the

stream! but our great man, our Robin, against it. And how often in old histories have the great men striven against the stream, and how often in the long sweep of years to come must the great man strive against it again to save his country, and the liberties of his people! God bless our well-beloved Robin, Earl of Huntingdon.

*Sir Richard.* Ay, ay. He wore thy colours once at a tourney. I am old and forget. Was Prince John there?

*Marian.* The Sheriff of Nottingham was there—not John.

*Sir Richard.* Beware of John and the Sheriff of Nottingham. They hunt in couples, and when they look at a maid they blast her.

*Marian.* Then the maid is not high-hearted enough.

*Sir Richard.* There—there—be not a fool again. Their aim is ever at that which flies highest—but O girl, girl, I am almost in despair. Those two thousand marks lent me by the Abbot for the ransom of my son Walter—I believed this Abbot of the party of King Richard, and he hath sold himself to that beast John—they must be paid in a year and a month, or I lose the land. There is one that should be grateful to me overseas, a Count in Brittany—he lives near Quimper. I saved his life once in battle. He has monies. I will go to him. I saved him. I will try him. I am all but sure of him. I will go to him.

*Marian.* And I will follow thee, and God help us both.

*Sir Richard.* Child, thou shouldst marry one who will pay the mortgage. This Robin, this Earl of Huntingdon—he is a friend of Richard—I know not, but he may save the land, he may save the land.

*Marian* (*showing a cross hung round her neck*). Father, you see this cross?

*Sir Richard.* Ay the King, thy god-father, gave it thee when a baby.

*Marian.* And he said that whenever I married he would give me away, and on this cross I have sworn [*kisses it*] that till I myself pass away, there is no other man that shall give me away.

*Sir Richard.* Lo there—thou art fool

again—I am all as loyal as thyself, but what a vow! what a vow!

*Re-enter* LITTLE JOHN.

*Little John.* My Lady Marian, your woman so flustered me that I forgot my message from the Earl. To-day he hath accomplished his thirtieth birthday, and he prays your ladyship and your ladyship's father to be present at his banquet to-night.

*Marian.* Say, we will come.

*Little John.* And I pray you, my lady, to stand between me and your woman, Kate.

*Marian.* I will speak with her.

*Little John.* I thank you, my lady, and I wish you and your ladyship's father a most exceedingly good morning. [*Exit.*]

*Sir Richard.* Thou hast answered for me, but I know not if I will let thee go.

*Marian.* I mean to go.

*Sir Richard.* Not if I barred thee up in thy chamber, like a bird in a cage.

*Marian.* Then I would drop from the casement, like a spider.

*Sir Richard.* But I would hoist the drawbridge, like thy master.

*Marian.* And I would swim the moat, like an otter.

*Sir Richard.* But I would set my men-at-arms to oppose thee, like the Lord of the Castle.

*Marian.* And I would break through them all, like the King of England.

*Sir Richard.* Well, thou shalt go, but O the land! the land! my great great great grandfather, my great great grandfather, my great grandfather, my grandfather and my own father—they were born and bred on it—it was their mother—they have trodden it for half a thousand years, and whenever I set my own foot on it I say to it, Thou art mine, and it answers, I am thine to the very heart of the earth—but now I have lost my gold, I have lost my son, and I shall lose my land also. Down to the devil with this bond that beggars me!

[*Flings down the bond.*]

*Marian.* Take it again, dear father, be not wroth at the dumb parchment. Sufficient for the day, dear father! let us be merry to-night at the banquet.

SCENE II.—A BANQUETING-HALL IN THE HOUSE OF ROBIN HOOD THE EARL OF HUNTINGDON.

*Doors open into a banquetting-hall where he is at feast with his friends.*

*Drinking Song.*

Long live Richard,  
Robin and Richard!  
Long live Richard!  
Down with John!  
Drink to the Lion-heart  
Every one!  
Pledge the Plantagenet,  
Him that is gone.  
Who knows whither?  
God's good Angel  
Help him back hither,  
And down with John!  
Long live Robin,  
Robin and Richard!  
Long live Robin,  
And down with John!

*Enter* PRINCE JOHN *disguised as a monk* and the SHERIFF of NOTTINGHAM. *Cries of 'Down with John,' 'Long live King Richard,' 'Down with John.'*

*Prince John.* Down with John! ha. Shall I be known? is my disguise perfect?

*Sheriff.* Perfect—who should know you for Prince John, so that you keep the cowl down and speak not?

[*Shouts from the banquet-room.*]

*Prince John.* Thou and I will still these revelries presently.

[*Shouts, 'Long live King Richard!'*]  
I come here to see this daughter of Sir Richard of the Lea and if her beauties answer their report. If so—

*Sheriff.* If so—

[*Shouts, 'Down with John!'*]

*Prince John.* You hear!

*Sheriff.* Yes, my lord, fear not. I will answer for you.

*Enter* LITTLE JOHN, SCARLET, MUCH, &c., *from the banquet singing a snatch of the Drinking Song.*

*Little John.* I am a silent man myself, and all the more wonder at our Earl. What a wealth of words—O Lord, I will live and die for King Richard—not so much for the cause as for the Earl. O Lord, I am easily led by words, but I

think the Earl hath right. Scarlet, hath not the Earl right? What makes thee so down in the mouth?

*Scarlet.* I doubt not, I doubt not, and though I be down in the mouth, I will swear by the head of the Earl.

*Little John.* Thou Much, miller's son, hath not the Earl right?

*Much.* More water goes by the mill than the miller wots of, and more goes to make right than I know of, but for all that I will swear the Earl hath right. But they are coming hither for the dance—

(Enter FRIAR TUCK.)

be they not, Friar Tuck? Thou art the Earl's confessor and shouldst know.

*Tuck.* Ay, ay, and but that I am a man of weight, and the weight of the church to boot on my shoulders, I would dance too. Fa, la, la, fa, la, la.

[*Capering.*

*Much.* But doth not the weight of the flesh at odd times overbalance the weight of the church, ha friar?

*Tuck.* Homo sum. I love my dinner—but I can fast, I can fast; and as to other frailties of the flesh—out upon thee! Homo sum, sed virgo sum, I am a virgin, my masters, I am a virgin.

*Much.* And a virgin, my masters, three yards about the waist is like to remain a virgin, for who could embrace such an armful of joy?

*Tuck.* Knave, there is a lot of wild fellows in Sherwood Forest who hold by King Richard. If ever I meet thee there, I will break thy sconce with my quarter-staff.

Enter from the banqueting-hall SIR RICHARD LEA, ROBIN HOOD, &c.

*Robin.* My guests and friends, Sir Richard, all of you Who deign to honour this my thirtieth year, And some of you were prophets that I might be, Now that the sun our King is gone, the light Of these dark hours; but this new moon, I fear,

Is darkness. Nay, this may be the last time

When I shall hold my birthday in this hall:

I may be outlaw'd, I have heard a rumour.

*All.* God forbid!

*Robin.* Nay, but we have no news of Richard yet, And ye did wrong in crying 'Down with John;'

For be he dead, then John may be our King.

*All.* God forbid!

*Robin.* Ay God forbid, But if it be so we must bear with John. The man is able enough—no lack of wit, And apt at arms and shrewd in policy. Courteous enough too when he wills; and yet

I hate him for his want of chivalry.

He that can pluck the flower of maidenhood

From off the stalk and trample it in the mire,

And boast that he hath trampled it. I hate him,

I hate the man. I may not hate the King

For aught I know,

So that our Barons bring his baseness under.

I think they will be mightier than the king.

[*Dance music.*

(*MARIAN enters with other damsels.*)

*Robin.* The high Heaven guard thee from his wantonness

Who art the fairest flower of maidenhood That ever blossom'd on this English isle.

*Marian.* Cloud not thy birthday with one fear for me.

My lord, myself and my good father pray Thy thirtieth summer may be thirty-fold As happy as any of those that went before.

*Robin.* My Lady Marian you can make it so

If you will deign to tread a measure with me.

*Marian.* Full willingly, my lord.

[*They dance.*

*Robin (after dance).* My Lady, will you answer me a question?

*Marian.* Any that you may ask.

*Robin.* A question that every true man asks of a woman once in his life.

*Marian.* I will not answer it, my lord, till King Richard come home again.

*Prince John (to Sheriff).* How she looks up at him, how she holds her face!

Now if she kiss him, I will have his head.

*Sheriff.* Peace, my lord; the Earl and Sir Richard come this way.

*Robin.* Must you have these monies before the year and the month end?

*Sir Richard.* Or I forfeit my land to the Abbot. I must pass overseas to one that I trust will help me.

*Robin.* Leaving your fair Marian alone here.

*Sir Richard.* Ay, for she hath somewhat of the lioness in her, and there be men-at-arms to guard her.

[Robin, Sir Richard, and Marian pass on.

*Prince John (to Sheriff).* Why that will be our opportunity

When I and thou will rob the nest of her.

*Sheriff.* Good Prince, art thou in need of any gold?

*Prince John.* Gold? why? not now.

*Sheriff.* I would give thee any gold So that myself alone might rob the nest.

*Prince John.* Well, well then, thou shalt rob the nest alone.

*Sheriff.* Swear to me by that relic on thy neck.

*Prince John.* I swear then by this relic on my neck—

No, no, I will not swear by this; I keep it For holy vows made to the blessed Saints Not pleasures, women's matters.

Dost thou mistrust me? Am I not thy friend?

Beware, man, lest thou lose thy faith in me.

I love thee much; and as I am thy friend, I promise thee to make this Marian thine.

Go now and ask the maid to dance with thee,

And learn from her if she do love this Earl.

*Sheriff (advancing toward Marian and Robin).* Pretty mistress!

*Robin.* What art thou, man? Sheriff of Nottingham?

*Sheriff.* Ay, my lord. I and my friend, this monk, were here belated, and seeing the hospitable lights in your castle, and knowing the fame of your hospitality, we ventured in uninvited.

*Robin.* You are welcome, though I fear you be of those who hold more by John than Richard.

*Sheriff.* True, for through John I had my sheriffship. I am John's till Richard come back again, and then I am Richard's. Pretty mistress, will you dance?

[*They dance.*

*Robin (talking to Prince John).* What monk of what convent art thou? Why wearest thou thy cowl to hide thy face?

[*Prince John shakes his head.*

Is he deaf, or dumb, or daft, or drunk belike?

[*Prince John shakes his head.*

Why comest thou like a death's head at my feast?

[*Prince John points to the Sheriff, who is dancing with Marian.*

Is he thy mouthpiece, thine interpreter?

[*Prince John nods.*

*Sheriff (to Marian as they pass).* Beware of John!

*Marian.* I hate him.

*Sheriff.* Would you cast An eye of favour on me, I would pay My brother all his debt and save the land.

*Marian.* I cannot answer thee till Richard come.

*Sheriff.* And when he comes?

*Marian.* Well, you must wait till then.

*Little John (dancing with Kate).* Is it made up? Will you kiss me?

*Kate.* You shall give me the first kiss.

*Little John.* There (*kisses her*). Now thine.

*Kate.* You shall wait for mine till Sir Richard has paid the Abbot.

[*They pass on.*

[*The Sheriff leaves Marian with her father and comes toward Robin.*

*Robin (to Sheriff, Prince John standing by).* Sheriff, thy friend, this monk, is but a statue.

*Sheriff.* Pardon him, my lord: he is



a holy Palmer, bounden by a vow not to show his face, nor to speak word to anyone, till he join King Richard in the Holy Land.

*Robin.* Going to the Holy Land to Richard! Give me thy hand and tell him— Why, what a cold grasp is thine—as if thou didst repent thy courtesy even in the doing it. That is no true man's hand. I hate hidden faces.

*Sheriff.* Pardon him again, I pray you; but the twilight of the coming day already glimmers in the east. We thank you, and farewell.

*Robin.* Farewell, farewell. I hate hidden faces.

[*Exeunt Prince John and Sheriff.*]

*Sir Richard* (*coming forward with Maid Marian*). How close the Sheriff peer'd into thine eyes!

What did he say to thee?

*Marian.* Bade me beware Of John: what maid but would beware of John?

*Sir Richard.* What else?

*Marian.* I care not what he said.

*Sir Richard.* What else?

*Marian.* That if I cast an eye of favour on him, Himself would pay this mortgage to his brother, And save the land.

*Sir Richard.* Did he say so, the Sheriff?

*Robin.* I fear this Abbot is a heart of flint,

Hard as the stones of his abbey.

O good Sir Richard,

I am sorry my exchequer runs so low

I cannot help you in this exigency;

For though my men and I flash out at times

Of festival like burnish'd summer-flies,

We make but one hour's buzz, are only like

The rainbow of a momentary sun.

I am mortgaged as thyself.

*Sir Richard.* Ay! I warrant thee— thou canst not be sorrier than I am. Come away, daughter.

*Robin.* Farewell, Sir Richard; farewell, sweet Marian.

*Marian.* Till better times.

*Robin.* But if the better times should never come?

*Marian.* Then I shall be no worse.

*Robin.* And if the worst time come?

*Marian.* Why then I will be better than the time.

*Robin.* This ring my mother gave me: it was her own

Betrothal ring. She pray'd me when I loved

A maid with all my heart to pass it down A finger of that hand which should be mine

Thereafter. Will you have it? Will you wear it?

*Marian.* Ay, noble Earl, and never part with it.

*Sir Richard Lea* (*coming up*). Not till she clean forget thee, noble Earl.

*Marian.* Forget him—never—by this Holy Cross

Which good King Richard gave me when a child—

Never!

Not while the swallow skims along the ground,

And while the lark flies up and touches heaven!

Not while the smoke floats from the cottage roof,

And the white cloud is roll'd along the sky!

Not while the rivulet babbles by the door, And the great breaker beats upon the beach!

Never—

Till Nature, high and low, and great and small

Forgets herself, and all her loves and hates

Sink again into chaos.

*Sir Richard Lea.* Away! away!  
[*Exeunt to music.*]

SCENE III.—SAME AS SCENE II.

ROBIN *and his men.*

*Robin.* All gone!—my ring—I am happy—should be happy.

She took my ring. I trust she loves me—yet

I heard this Sheriff tell her he would pay



The mortgage if she favour'd him. I fear  
Not her, the father's power upon her.

Friends, (*to his men*)

I am only merry for an hour or two  
Upon a birthday: if this life of ours  
Be a good glad thing, why should we  
make us merry

Because a year of it is gone? but Hope  
Smiles from the threshold of the year to  
come

Whispering 'it will be happier,' and old  
faces

Press round us, and warm hands close  
with warm hands,

And thro' the blood the wine leaps to  
the brain

Like April sap to the topmost tree, that  
shoots

New buds to heaven, whereon the throstle  
rock'd

Sings a new song to the new year—and you  
Strike up a song, my friends, and then to  
bed.

*Little John.* What will you have, my  
lord?

*Robin.* 'To sleep! to sleep!'

*Little John.* There is a touch of sad-  
ness in it, my lord,

But ill befitting such a festal day.

*Robin.* I have a touch of sadness in  
myself.

Sing.

*Song.*

To sleep! to sleep! The long bright day is done,  
And darkness rises from the fallen sun.

To sleep! to sleep!

Whate'er thy joys, they vanish with the day;

Whate'er thy griefs, in sleep they fade away.

To sleep! to sleep!

Sleep, mournful heart, and let the past be past!

Sleep, happy soul! all life will sleep at last.

To sleep! to sleep!

[*A trumpet blown at the gates.*]

*Robin.* Who breaks the stillness of  
the morning thus?

*Little John* (*going out and returning*).

It is a royal messenger, my lord:

I trust he brings us news of the King's  
coming.

*Enter a PURSUIVANT who reads.*

O yes, O yes, O yes! In the name of  
the Regent. Thou, Robin Hood Earl of  
Huntingdon art attainted and hast lost

thine earldom of Huntingdon. More-  
over thou art dispossessed of all thy  
lands, goods, and chattels; and by virtue  
of this writ, whereas Robin Hood Earl  
of Huntingdon by force and arms hath  
trespassed against the king in divers  
manners, therefore by the judgment of  
the officers of the said lord king, accord-  
ing to the law and custom of the king-  
dom of England Robin Hood Earl of  
Huntingdon is outlawed and banished.

*Robin.* I have shelter'd some that  
broke the forest laws.  
This is irregular and the work of John.

[*Irregular, irregular! (tumult)* Down  
with him, tear his coat from his  
back!']

*Messenger.* Ho there! ho there, the  
Sheriff's men without!

*Robin.* Nay, let them be, man, let  
them be. We yield.

How should we cope with John? The  
London folkmote

Has made him all but king, and he hath  
seized

On half the royal castles. Let him alone!  
(*to his men*)

A worthy messenger! how should he  
help it?

Shall we too work injustice? what, thou  
shakest!

Here, here—a cup of wine—drink and  
begone! [*Exit Messenger.*]

We will away in four-and-twenty hours,  
But shall we leave our England?

*Tuck.*

*Robin, Earl—*

*Robin.* Let be the Earl. Henceforth  
I am no more

Then plain man to plain man.

*Tuck.*

Well, then, plain man,  
There be good fellows there in merry  
Sherwood

That hold by Richard, tho' they kill his  
deer.

*Robin.* In Sherwood Forest. I have  
heard of them.

Have they no leader?

*Tuck.*

Each man for his own.  
Be thou their leader and they will all of  
them

Swarm to thy voice like bees to the brass  
pan.

*Robin.* They hold by Richard—the wild wood! to cast  
All threadbare household habit, mix with all  
The lusty life of wood and underwood,  
Hawk, buzzard, jay, the mavis and the merle,  
The tawny squirrel vaulting thro' the boughs,  
The deer, the highback'd polecat, the wild boar,  
The burrowing badger—By St. Nicholas  
I have a sudden passion for the wild wood—  
We should be free as air in the wild wood—  
What say you? shall we go? Your hands, your hands!

[*Gives his hand to each.*]

You, Scarlet, you are always moody here.  
*Scarlet.* 'Tis for no lack of love to you, my lord,  
But lack of happiness in a blatant wife.  
She broke my head on Tuesday with a dish.

I would have thwack'd the woman, but I did not,  
Because thou sayest such fine things of women,  
But I shall have to thwack her if I stay.

*Robin.* Would it be better for thee in the wood?

*Scarlet.* Ay, so she did not follow me to the wood.

*Robin.* Then, Scarlet, thou at least wilt go with me.

Thou, Much, the miller's son, I knew thy father:

He was a manly man, as thou art, Much,  
And gray before his time as thou art, Much.

*Much.* It is the trick of the family, my lord.

There was a song he made to the turning wheel—

*Robin.* 'Turn! turn!' but I forget it.  
*Much.* I can sing it.

*Robin.* Not now, good Much! And thou, dear Little John,

Who hast that worship for me which Heaven knows

I ill deserve—you love me, all of you,  
But I am outlaw'd, and if caught, I die.

Your hands again. All thanks for all your service;

But if you follow me, you may die with me.

*All.* We will live and die with thee, we will live and die with thee.

## ACT II.—THE FLIGHT OF MARIAN.

### ACT II.

#### SCENE I.—A BROAD FOREST GLADE.

*Woodman's hut at one side with half-door, FORESTERS are looking to their bows and arrows, or polishing their swords.*

FORESTERS sing (*as they disperse to their work*).

There is no land like England  
Where'er the light of day be;  
There are no hearts like English hearts  
Such hearts of oak as they be.  
There is no land like England  
Where'er the light of day be;  
There are no men like Englishmen  
So tall and bold as they be.

(*Full chorus.*)

And these will strike for England  
And man and maid be free  
To foil and spoil the tyrant  
Beneath the greenwood tree.

There is no land like England  
Where'er the light of day be;  
There are no wives like English wives  
So fair and chaste as they be.  
There is no land like England  
Where'er the light of day be;  
There are no maids like English maids  
So beautiful as they be.

(*Full chorus.*)

And these shall wed with freemen,  
And all their sons be free,  
To sing the songs of England  
Beneath the greenwood tree.

*Robin (alone).* My lonely hour!

The king of day hath stept from off his throne,

Flung by the golden mantle of the cloud,  
And sets, a naked fire. The King of England

Perchance this day may sink as gloriously,

Red with his own and enemy's blood—but no!

We hear he is in prison. It is my birthday.

I have reign'd one year in the wild wood.

My mother,

For whose sake, and the blessed Queen  
of Heaven,

I reverence all women, bad me, dying,  
Whene'er this day should come about, to  
carve

One lone hour from it, so to meditate  
Upon my greater nearness to the birth-  
day

Of the after-life, when all the sheeted  
dead

Are shaken from their stillness in the  
grave

By the last trumpet.

Am I worse or better?

I am outlaw'd. I am none the worse for  
that.

I held for Richard, and I hated John.

I am a thief, ay, and a king of thieves.

Ay! but we rob the robber, wrong the  
wronger,

And what we wring from them we give  
the poor.

I am none the worse for that, and all the  
better

For this free forest-life, for while I sat  
Among my thralls in my baronial hall

The groining hid the heavens; but since  
I breathed,

A houseless head beneath the sun and  
stars,

The soul of the woods hath stricken thro'  
my blood,

The love of freedom, the desire of God,  
The hope of larger life hereafter, more

Tenfold than under roof. [*Horn blown.*  
True, were I taken

They would prick out my sight. A price  
is set

On this poor head; but I believe there  
lives

No man who truly loves and truly rules  
His following, but can keep his followers  
true.

I am one with mine. Traitors are rarely  
bred

Save under traitor kings. Our vice-king  
John,

True king of vice—true play on words—  
our John

By his Norman arrogance and dissolute-  
ness,

Hath made *me* king of all the discontent  
Of England up thro' all the forest land  
North to the Tyne: being outlaw'd in a  
land

Where law lies dead, we make ourselves  
the law.

Why break you thus upon my lonely  
hour?

*Enter* LITTLE JOHN *and* KATE.

*Little John.* I found this white doe  
wandering thro' the wood,  
Not thine, but mine. I have shot her  
thro' the heart.

*Kate.* He lies, my lord. I have shot  
*him* thro' the heart.

*Robin.* My God, thou art the very  
woman who waits

On my dear Marian. Tell me, tell me of  
her.

Thou comest a very angel out of heaven.  
Where is she? and how fares she?

*Kate.* O my good lord,  
I am but an angel by reflected light.

Your heaven is vacant of your angel.  
John—

Shame on him!—

Stole on her, she was walking in the  
garden,

And after some slight speech about the  
Sheriff

He caught her round the waist, whereon  
she struck him,

And fled into the castle. She and Sir  
Richard

Have past away, I know not where; and I  
Was left alone, and knowing as I did

That I had shot him thro' the heart, I  
came

To eat him up and make an end of him.  
*Little John.* In kisses?

*Kate.* You, how dare you  
mention kisses?

But I am weary pacing thro' the wood.  
Show me some cave or cabin where I  
may rest.

*Robin.* Go with him. I will talk with  
thee anon.

[*Exeunt* Little John *and* Kate.  
She struck him, my brave Marian, struck  
the Prince,

The serpent that had crept into the gar-  
den

And coil'd himself about her sacred waist.

I think I should have stricken him to the death.

He never will forgive her.

O the Sheriff  
Would pay this cursed mortgage to his brother

If Marian would marry him; and the son  
Is most like dead—if so the land may come

To Marian, and they rate the land five-fold

The worth of the mortgage, and who marries her

Marries the land. Most honourable Sheriff!

(*Passionately*) Gone, and it may be gone for evermore!

O would that I could see her for a moment

Glide like a light across these woodland ways!

Tho' in one moment she should glance away,

I should be happier for it all the year.

O would she moved beside me like my shadow!

O would she stood before me as my queen,

To make this Sherwood Eden o'er again,  
And these rough oaks the palms of Paradise!

Ah! but who be those three yonder with bows?—not of my band—the Sheriff, and by heaven, Prince John himself and one of those mercenaries that suck the blood of England. My people are all scattered I know not where. Have they come for me? Here is the witch's hut. The fool-people call her a witch—a good witch to me! I will shelter here.

[*Knocks at the door of the hut.*]

OLD WOMAN *comes out.*

*Old Woman (kisses his hand).* Ah dear Robin! ah noble captain, friend of the poor!

*Robin.* I am chased by my foes. I have forgotten my horn that calls my men together. Disguise me—thy gown and thy coif.

*Old Woman.* Come in, come in; I

would give my life for thee, for when the Sheriff had taken all our goods for the King without paying, our horse and our little cart—

*Robin.* Quick, good mother, quick!

*Old Woman.* Ay, ay, gown, coif, and petticoat, and the old woman's blessing with them to the last fringe.

[*They go in.*]

*Enter* PRINCE JOHN, SHERIFF OF NOTTINGHAM, and MERCENARY.

*Prince John.* Did we not hear the two would pass this way?

They must have past. Here is a woodman's hut.

*Mercenary.* Take heed, take heed! in Nottingham they say

There bides a foul witch somewhere hereabout.

*Sheriff.* Not in this hut I take it.

*Prince John.* Why not here?

*Sheriff.* I saw a man go in, my lord.

*Prince John.* Not two?

*Sheriff.* No, my lord, one.

*Prince John.* Make for the cottage then!

*Interior of the hut. ROBIN disguised as old woman.*

*Prince John (without).* Knock again! knock again!

*Robin (to Old Woman).* Get thee into the closet there, and make a ghostly wail ever and anon to scare 'em.

*Old Woman.* I will, I will, good Robin. [*Goes into closet.*]

*Prince John (without).* Open, open, or I will drive the door from the doorpost.

*Robin (opens door).* Come in, come in.

*Prince John.* Why did ye keep us at the door so long?

*Robin (curtseying).* I was afraid it was the ghost, your worship.

*Prince John.* Ghost! did one in white pass?

*Robin (curtseying).* No, your worship.

*Prince John.* Did two knights pass?

*Robin (curtseying).* No, your worship.

*Sheriff.* I fear me we have lost our labour, then.

*Prince John.* Except this old hag have been bribed to lie.

*Robin.* We old hags should be bribed to speak truth, for, God help us, we lie by nature.

*Prince John.* There was a man just now that enter'd here?

*Robin.* There is but one old woman in the hut. [Old Woman yells.

*Robin.* I crave your worship's pardon. There is yet another old woman. She was murdered here a hundred year ago, and whenever a murder is to be done again she yells out i' this way—so they say, your worship.

*Mercenary.* Now, if I hadn't a sprig o' wickentree sewn into my dress, I should run.

*Prince John.* Tut! tut! the scream of some wild woodland thing.

How came we to be parted from our men? We shouted, and *they* shouted, as I thought,

But shout and echo play'd into each other

So hollowly we knew not which was which.

*Robin.* The wood is full of echoes, owls, elfs, ouphes, oafs, ghosts o' the mist, wills-o'-the-wisp; only they that be bred in it can find their way a-nights in it.

*Prince John.* I am footsore and famish'd therewithal.

Is there aught there?

[*Pointing to cupboard.*

*Robin.* Naught for the likes o' you.

*Prince John.* Speak straight out, crookback.

*Robin.* Sour milk and black bread.

*Prince John.* Well, set them forth.

I could eat anything.

[*He sets out a table with black bread.*

This is mere marble. Old hag, how should thy one tooth drill thro' this?

*Robin.* Nay, by St. Gemini, I ha' two; and since the Sheriff left me naught but an empty belly, they can meet upon anything thro' a millstone. You gentles that live upo' manchet-bread and march-pane, what should you know o' the food o' the poor? Look you here, before you can eat it you must hack it with a hatchet, break it all to pieces, as you break the

poor, as you would hack at Robin Hood if you could light upon him (*hacks it and flings two pieces*). There's for you, and there's for you—and the old woman's welcome.

*Prince John.* The old wretch is mad, and her bread is beyond me: and the milk—faugh! Hast thou anything to sweeten this?

*Robin.* Here's a pot o' wild honey from an old oak, saving your sweet reverences.

*Sheriff.* Thou hast a cow then, hast thou?

*Robin.* Ay, for when the Sheriff took my little horse for the King without paying for it—

*Sheriff.* How hadst thou then the means to buy a cow?

*Robin.* Eh, I would ha' given my whole body to the King had *he* asked for it, like the woman at Acre when the Turk shot her as she was helping to build the mound against the city. I ha' served the King living, says she, and let me serve him dead, says she; let me go to make the mound: bury me in the mound, says the woman.

*Sheriff.* Ay, but the cow?

*Robin.* She was given me.

*Sheriff.* By whom?

*Robin.* By a thief.

*Sheriff.* Who, woman, who?

*Robin (sings).*

He was a forester good;  
He was the cock o' the walk;  
He was the king o' the wood.

Your worship may find another rhyme if you care to drag your brains for such a minnow.

*Sheriff.* That cow was mine. I have lost a cow from my meadow. Robin Hood was it? I thought as much. He will come to the gibbet at last.

[*Old Woman yells.*

*Mercenary.* O sweet sir, talk not of cows. You anger the spirit.

*Prince John.* Anger the scritch-owl.

*Mercenary.* But, my lord, the scritch-owl bodes death, my lord.

*Robin.* I beseech you all to speak lower. Robin may be hard by wi' three-



score of his men. He often looks in here by the moonshine. Beware of Robin.

[Old Woman yells.

*Mercenary.* Ah, do you hear? There may be murder done.

*Sheriff.* Have you not finished, my lord?

*Robin.* Thou hast crost him in love, and I have heard him swear he will be even wi' thee. [Old Woman yells.

*Mercenary.* Now is my heart so down in my heels that if I stay, I can't run.

*Sheriff.* Shall we not go?

*Robin.* And, old hag tho' I be, I can spell the hand. Give me thine. Ay, ay, the line o' life is marked enow; but look, there is a cross line o' sudden death. I pray thee, go, go, for tho' thou wouldst bar me fro' the milk o' my cow, I wouldn't have thy blood on my hearth.

*Prince John.* Why do you listen, man, to the old fool?

*Sheriff.* I will give thee a silver penny if thou wilt show us the way back to Nottingham.

*Robin (with a very low curtsey).* All the sweet saints bless your worship for your alms to the old woman! but make haste then, and be silent in the wood. Follow me. [Takes his bow.

(They come out of the hut and close the door carefully.)

[Outside hut.

*Robin.* Softly! softly! there may be a thief in every bush.

*Prince John.* How should this old lamester guide us? Where is thy good-man?

*Robin.* The saints were so kind to both on us that he was dead before he was born.

*Prince John.* Half-witted and a witch to boot! Mislead us, and I will have thy life! and what doest thou with that who art more bow-bent than the very bow thou carriest?

*Robin.* I keep it to kill nightingales.

*Prince John.* Nightingales!

*Robin.* You see, they are so fond o' their own voices that I cannot sleep o' nights by cause on 'em.

*Prince John.* True soul of the Saxon churl for whom song has no charm.

*Robin.* Then I roast 'em, for I have nought else to live on (*whines*). O your honour, I pray you too to give me an alms. (*To Prince John.*)

*Sheriff.* This is no bow to hit nightingales; this is a true woodman's bow of the best yew-wood to slay the deer. Look, my lord, there goes one in the moonlight. Shoot!

*Prince John (shoots).* Missed! There goes another. Shoot, Sheriff!

*Sheriff (shoots).* Missed!

*Robin.* And here comes another. Why, an old woman can shoot closer than you two.

*Prince John.* Shoot then, and if thou miss I will fasten thee to thine own door-post and make thine old carcase a target for us three.

*Robin (raises himself upright, shoots, and hits).* Hit! Did I not tell you an old woman could shoot better?

*Prince John.* Thou standest straight. Thou speakest manlike. Thou art no old woman—thou art disguised—thou art one of the thieves.

[Makes a clutch at the gown, which comes in pieces and falls, showing Robin in his forester's dress.

*Sheriff.* It is the very captain of the thieves!

*Prince John.* We have him at last; we have him at advantage. Strike, Sheriff! Strike, mercenary!

[They draw swords and attack him; he defends himself with his.

Enter LITTLE JOHN.

*Little John.* I have lodged my pretty Katekin in her bower.

How now? Clashing of swords—three upon one, and that one our Robin! Rogues, have you no manhood?

[Draws and defends Robin.

Enter SIR RICHARD LEA (*draws his sword*).

*Sir Richard Lea.* Old as I am, I will not brook to see Three upon two.

(Maid Marian in the armour of a Red-cross Knight follows half un-sheathing her sword and half seen.)



Back ! back ! I charge thee, back !  
Is this a game for thee to play at ? Away.

(*She retires to the fringe of the copse.*)

[*He fights on Robin's side. The other three are beaten off and exeunt.*]

Enter FRIAR TUCK.

*Friar Tuck.* I am too late then with  
my quarterstaff !

*Robin.* Quick, friar, follow them :  
See whether there be more of 'em in the  
wood.

*Friar Tuck.* On the gallop, on the  
gallop, Robin, like a deer from a dog, or  
a colt from a gad-fly, or a stump-tailed ox  
in May-time, or the cow that jumped over  
the moon. [*Exit.*]

*Robin.* Nay, nay, but softly, lest they  
spy thee, friar !

[*To Sir Richard Lea who reels.*  
Take thou mine arm. Who art thou,  
gallant knight ?

*Sir Richard.* Robin, I am Sir Richard  
of the Lea.  
Who be those three that I have fought  
withal ?

*Robin.* Prince John, the Sheriff, and  
a mercenary.

*Sir Richard.* Prince John again. We  
are flying from this John.  
The Sheriff—I am grieved it was the  
Sheriff ;

For, Robin, he must be my son-in-law.  
Thou art an outlaw, and couldst never  
pay

The mortgage on my land. Thou wilt  
not see

My Marian more. So—so—I have pre-  
sumed

Beyond my strength. Give me a draught  
of wine. [*Marian comes forward.*]

This is my son but late escaped from  
prison,

For whom I ran into my debt to the  
Abbot,

Two thousand marks in gold. I have  
paid him half.

That other thousand—shall I ever pay  
it ?

A draught of wine.

*Robin.* Our cellar is hard by.

Take him, good Little John, and give him  
wine.

[*Exit Sir Richard leaning on Little John.*  
A brave old fellow but he angers me.

[*To Maid Marian who is fol-  
lowing her father.*]

Young Walter, nay, I pray thee, stay a  
moment.

*Marian.* A moment for some matter  
of no moment !

Well—! take and use your moment, while  
you may.

*Robin.* Thou art her brother, and her  
voice is thine,

Her face is thine, and if thou be as gentle  
Give me some news of my sweet Marian.

Where is she ?

*Marian.* Thy sweet Marian ? I  
believe

She came with me into the forest here.

*Robin.* She follow'd thee into the  
forest here ?

*Marian.* Nay—that, my friend, I am  
sure I did not say.

*Robin.* Thou blowest hot and cold.  
Where is she then ?

*Marian.* Is she not here with thee ?

*Robin.* Would God she were !

*Marian.* If not with thee I know not  
where she is.

She may have lighted on your fairies here,  
And now be skipping in their fairy-rings,  
And capering hand in hand with Oberon.

*Robin.* Peace !

*Marian.* Or learning witchcraft of  
your woodland witch

And how to charm and waste the hearts  
of men.

*Robin.* That is not brother-like.

*Marian* (*pointing to the sky*). Or  
there perchance

Up yonder with the man i' the moon.

*Robin.* No more !

*Marian.* Or haply fallen a victim to  
the wolf.

*Robin.* Tut ! be there wolves in Sher-  
wood ?

*Marian.* The wolf, John !

*Robin.* Curse him ! but thou art mock-  
ing me. Thou art

Her brother—I forgive thee. Come be  
thou

My brother too. She loves me.

*Marian.* Doth she so?  
*Robin.* Do you doubt me when I say she loves me, man?  
*Marian.* No, but my father will not lose his land,  
 Rather than that would wed her with the Sheriff.  
*Robin.* Thou hold'st with him?  
*Marian.* Yes, in some sort I do. He is old and almost mad to keep the land.  
*Robin.* Thou hold'st with him?  
*Marian.* I tell thee, in some sort.  
*Robin (angrily).* Sort! sort! what sort? what sort of man art thou  
 For land, not love? Thou wilt inherit the land,  
 And so wouldst sell thy sister to the Sheriff,  
 O thou unworthy brother of my dear Marian!  
 And now, I do bethink me, thou wast by  
 And never drewest sword to help the old man  
 When he was fighting.  
*Marian.* There were three to three.  
*Robin.* Thou shouldst have ta'en his place, and fought for him.  
*Marian.* He did it so well there was no call for me.  
*Robin.* My God!  
 That such a brother—*she* marry the Sheriff!  
 Come now, I fain would have a bout with thee.  
 It is but pastime—nay, I will not harm thee.  
 Draw!  
*Marian.* Earl, I would fight with any man but thee.  
*Robin.* Ay, ay, because I have a name for prowess.  
*Marian.* It is not that.  
*Robin.* That! I believe thou fell'st into the hands  
 Of these same Moors thro' nature's baseness, criedst  
 'I yield' almost before the thing was ask'd,  
 And thro' thy lack of manhood hast betray'd  
 Thy father to the losing of his land.

Come, boy! 'tis but to see if thou canst fence.

Draw! [*Draws.*]

*Marian.* No, Sir Earl, I will not fight to-day.

*Robin.* To-morrow then?

*Marian.* Well, I will fight to-morrow.

*Robin.* Give me thy glove upon it.

*Marian (pulls off her glove and gives it to him).* There!

*Robin.* O God!

What sparkles in the moonlight on thy hand? [*Takes her hand.*]

In that great heat to wed her to the Sheriff

Thou hast robb'd my girl of her betrothal ring.

*Marian.* No, no!

*Robin.* What! do I not know mine own ring?

*Marian.* I keep it for her.

*Robin.* Nay, she swore it never should leave her finger. Give it me, by heaven,

Or I will force it from thee.

*Marian.* O Robin, Robin!

*Robin.* O my dear Marian, Is it thou? is it thou? I fall before thee, clasp

Thy knees. I am ashamed. Thou shalt not marry

The Sheriff, but abide with me who love thee.

[*She moves from him, the moonlight falls upon her.*]

O look! before the shadow of these dark oaks

Thou seem'st a saintly splendour out from heaven,

Clothed with the mystic silver of her moon.

Speak but one word not only of forgiveness,

But to show thou art mortal.

*Marian.* Mortal enough, If love for thee be mortal. Lovers hold

True love immortal. Robin, tho' I love thee,

We cannot come together in this world. Not mortal! after death, if after death—

*Robin.* Life, life. I know not death.

Why do you vex me

With raven-croaks of death and after death?

*Marian.* And I and he are passing overseas:

He has a friend there will advance the monies,

So now the forest lawns are all as bright  
As ways to heaven, I pray thee give us guides

To lead us thro' the windings of the wood.

*Robin.* Must it be so? If it were so, myself

Would guide you thro' the forest to the sea.

But go not yet, stay with us, and when thy brother—

*Marian.* Robin, I ever held that saying false

That Love is blind, but thou hast proven it true.

Why—even your woodland squirrel sees the nut

Behind the shell, and thee however mask'd

I should have known. But thou—to dream that he

My brother, my dear Walter—now, perhaps,

Fetter'd and lash'd, a galley-slave, or closed

For ever in a Moorish tower, or wreckt  
And dead beneath the midland ocean, he

As gentle as he's brave—that such as he  
Would wrest from me the precious ring I

promised

Never to part with—No, not he, nor any.  
I would have battled for it to the death.

[*In her excitement she draws her sword.*]

See, thou hast wrong'd my brother and myself.

*Robin (kneeling).* See then, I kneel  
once more to be forgiven.

*Enter SCARLET, MUCH, several of the FORESTERS, rushing on.*

*Scarlet.* Look! look! he kneels! he has anger'd the foul witch,  
Who melts a waxen image by the fire,  
And drains the heart and marrow from a man.

*Much.* Our Robin beaten, pleading  
for his life!

Seize on the knight! wrench his sword  
from him!

[*They all rush on Marian.*]

*Robin (springing up and waving his hand).* Back!

Back all of you! this is Maid Marian

Flying from John—disguised.

*Men.* Maid Marian? she?

*Scarlet.* Captain, we saw thee cowering to a knight

And thought thou wert bewitch'd.

*Marian.* You dared to dream

That our great Earl, the bravest English heart

Since Hereward the Wake, would cower to any

Of mortal build. Weak natures that impute

Themselves to their unlikes, and their own want

Of manhood to their leader! he would break,

Far as he might, the power of John—but you—

What rightful cause could grow to such a heat

As burns a wrong to ashes, if the followers  
Of him, who heads the movement, held

him craven?

*Robin*—I know not, can I trust myself  
With your brave band? in some of these

may lodge

That baseness which for fear or monies, might

Betray me to the wild Prince.

*Robin.* No, love, no!

Not any of these, I swear.

*Men.* No, no, we swear.

SCENE II.—ANOTHER GLADE IN THE FOREST.

*ROBIN and MARIAN passing. Enter FORESTER.*

*Forester.* Knight, your good father had his draught of wine

And then he swoon'd away. He had been hurt,

And bled beneath his armour. Now he cries

'The land! the land!' Come to him.

*Marian.* O my poor father!

*Robin.* Stay with us in this wood, till he recover.  
We know all balms and simples of the field  
To help a wound. Stay with us here, sweet love,  
Maid Marian, till thou wed what man thou wilt.  
All here will prize thee, honour, worship thee,  
Crown thee with flowers; and he will soon be well:  
All will be well.

*Marian.* O lead me to my father!  
[*As they are going out enter Little John and Kate who falls on the neck of Marian.*]

*Kate.* No, no, false knight, thou canst not hide thyself  
From her who loves thee.

*Little John.* What!  
By all the devils in and out of Hell!  
Wilt thou embrace thy sweetheart 'fore my face?  
Quick with thy sword! the yeoman braves the knight.

There! (*strikes her with the flat of his sword*).

*Marian (laying about her).* Are the men all mad? there then, and there!

*Kate.* O hold thy hand! this is our Marian.

*Little John.* What! with this skill of fence! let go mine arm.

*Robin.* Down with thy sword! She is my queen and thine.  
The mistress of the band.

*Marian (sheathing her sword).* A maiden now  
Were ill-bested in these dark days of John,

Except she could defend her innocence.  
O lead me to my father.

[*Exeunt Robin and Marian.*]  
*Little John.* Speak to me,  
I am like a boy now going to be whipt;  
I know I have done amiss, have been a fool,

Speak to me, Kate, and say you pardon me!

*Kate.* I never will speak word to thee again.

What? to mistrust the girl you say you love

Is to mistrust your own love for your girl!  
How should you love if you mistrust your love?

*Little John.* O Kate, true love and jealousy are twins,  
And love is joyful, innocent, beautiful,  
And jealousy is wither'd, sour and ugly:  
Yet are they twins and always go together.

*Kate.* Well, well, until they cease to go together,  
I am but a stone and a dead stock to thee.

*Little John.* I thought I saw thee clasp and kiss a man  
And it was but a woman. Pardon me.

*Kate.* Ay, for I much disdain thee, but if ever

Thou see me clasp and kiss a man indeed,  
I will again be thine, and not till then.

[*Exit.*]

*Little John.* I have been a fool and I have lost my Kate. [*Exit.*]

*Re-enter ROBIN.*

*Robin.* He dozes. I have left her watching him.

She will not marry till her father yield.  
The old man dotes.

Nay—and she will not marry till Richard come,

And that's at latter Lammas—never perhaps.

Besides, tho' Friar Tuck might make us one,

An outlaw's bride may not be wife in law.  
I am weary. [*Lying down on a bank.*]

What's here? a dead bat in the fairy ring—

Yes, I remember, Scarlet hacking down  
A hollow ash, a bat flew out at him

In the clear noon, and hook'd him by the hair,

And he was scared and slew it. My men say

The fairies haunt this glade;—if one could catch

A glimpse of them and of their fairy Queen—

Have our loud pastimes driven them all away?

I never saw them: yet I could believe

There came some evil fairy at my birth  
And cursed me, as the last heir of my  
race:

'This boy will never wed the maid he  
loves,

Nor leave a child behind him' (*yawns*).

Weary—weary

As tho' a spell were on me (*he dreams*).

[*The whole stage lights up, and fairies  
are seen swinging on boughs and  
nestling in hollow trunks.*]

TITANIA on a hill. FAIRIES on either  
side of her. *The moon above the hill.*

*First Fairy.*

Evil fairy! do you hear?  
So he said who lieth here.

*Second Fairy.*

We be fairies of the wood,  
We be neither bad nor good.

*First Fairy.*

Back and side and hip and rib,  
Nip, nip him for his fib.

*Titania.*

Nip him not, but let him snore.  
We must flit for evermore.

*First Fairy.*

Tit, my queen, must it be so?  
Wherefore, wherefore should we go?

*Titania.*

I Titania bid you flit,  
And you dare to call me Tit.

*First Fairy.*

Tit, for love and brevity,  
Not for love of levity.

*Titania.*

Pertest of our flickering mob,  
Wouldst thou call my Oberon Ob?

*First Fairy.*

Nay, an please your Elfin Grace,  
Never Ob before his face.

*Titania.*

Fairy realm is breaking down  
When the fairy slights the crown.

*First Fairy.*

No, by wisp and glowworm, no,  
Only wherefore should we go?

*Titania.*

We must fly from Robin Hood  
And this new queen of the wood.

*First Fairy.*

True, she is a goodly thing.  
Jealousy, jealousy of the king.

*Titania.*

Nay, for Oberon fled away  
Twenty thousand leagues to-day.

*Chorus.*

Look, there comes a deputation  
From our finikin fairy nation.

*Enter several FAIRIES.*

*Third Fairy.*

Crush'd my bat whereon I flew.  
Found him dead and drench'd in dew,  
Queen.

*Fourth Fairy.*

Quash'd my frog that used to quack  
When I vaulted on his back,  
Queen.

*Fifth Fairy.*

Kill'd the sward where'er they sat,  
Queen.

*Sixth Fairy.*

Lusty bracken beaten flat,  
Queen.

*Seventh Fairy.*

Honest daisy deadly bruised,  
Queen.

*Eighth Fairy.*

Modest maiden lily abused,  
Queen.

*Ninth Fairy.*

Beetle's jewel armour crack'd,  
Queen.

*Tenth Fairy.*

Reed I rock'd upon broken-back'd,  
Queen.

*Fairies (in chorus).*

We be scared with song and shout.  
Arrows whistle all about.  
All our games be put to rout.  
All our rings be trampled out.  
Lead us thou to some deep glen.  
Far from solid foot of men,  
Never to return again,  
Queen.

*Titania (to First Fairy).*

Elf, with spiteful heart and eye,  
Talk of jealousy? You see why  
We must leave the wood and fly.

(To all the fairies who sing at intervals with Titania.)

Up with you, out of the forest and over the hills  
and away,  
And over this Robin Hood's bay!  
Up thro' the light of the seas by the moon's long-  
silvering ray!  
To a land where the fay,  
Not an eye to survey,  
In the night, in the day,  
Can have frolic and play.  
Up with you, all of you, out of it! hear and obey.  
Man, lying here alone,  
Moody creature,  
Of a nature  
Stronger, sadder than my own,  
Were I human, were I human,  
I could love you like a woman.  
Man, man,  
You shall wed your Marian.  
She is true, and you are true,  
And you love her and she loves you;  
Both be happy, and adieu for ever and for ever-  
more—adieu.

*Robin (half waking).* Shall I be  
happy? Happy vision, stay.

*Titania.*

Up with you, all of you, off with you, out of it,  
over the wood and away!

*Note.*—In the stage copy of my play I have had this Fairy Scene transferred to the end of the Third Act, for the sake of modern dramatic effect.

ACT III.—THE CROWNING OF MARIAN.

SCENE I.—HEART OF THE FOREST.

MARIAN and KATE (in Foresters' green).

*Kate.* What makes you seem so cold  
to Robin, lady?

*Marian.* What makes thee think I  
seem so cold to Robin?

*Kate.* You never whisper close as  
lovers do,  
Nor care to leap into each other's arms.

*Marian.* There is a fence I cannot  
overleap,  
My father's will.

*Kate.* Then you will wed the Sheriff?

*Marian.* When heaven falls, I may  
light on such a lark!

But who art thou to catechize me—thou  
That hast not made it up with Little  
John!

*Kate.* I wait till Little John makes  
up to me.

*Marian.* Why, my good Robin fan-  
cied me a man,  
And drew his sword upon me, and Little  
John

Fancied he saw thee clasp and kiss a man.

*Kate.* Well, if he fancied that I fancy  
a man

Other than him, he is not the man for me.

*Marian.* And that would quite unman  
him, heart and soul.

For both are thine.

(Looking up.)

But listen—overhead—

Fluting, and piping and luting 'Love,  
love, love'—

Those sweet tree-Cupids half-way up in  
heaven,

The birds—would I were one of 'em!

O good Kate—

If my man-Robin were but a bird-Robin,  
How happily would we lilt among the  
leaves

'Love, love, love, love'—what merry  
madness—listen!

And let them warm thy heart to Little  
John.

Look where he comes!

*Kate.* I will not meet him yet,  
I'll watch him from behind the trees,  
but call

Kate when you will, for I am close at  
hand.

KATE stands aside and enter ROBIN, and  
after him at a little distance LITTLE  
JOHN, MUCH the Miller's son, and  
SCARLET with an oaken chaplet, and  
other FORESTERS.

*Little John.* My lord—Robin—I  
crave pardon—you always seem to me  
my lord—I Little John, he Much the  
miller's son, and he Scarlet, honouring  
all womankind, and more especially my  
lady Marian, do here, in the name of  
all our woodmen, present her with this  
oaken chaplet as Queen of the wood, I  
Little John, he, young Scarlet, and he,  
old Much, and all the rest of us.

*Much.* And I, old Much, say as much,  
for being every inch a man I honour  
every inch of a woman.

*Robin.* Friend Scarlet, art thou less a  
man than Much?



Why art thou mute? Dost thou not honour woman?

*Scarlet.* Robin, I do, but I have a bad wife.

*Robin.* Then let her pass as an exception, Scarlet.

*Scarlet.* So I would, Robin, if any man would accept her.

*Marian (puts on the chaplet).* Had I a bulrush now in this right hand For sceptre, I were like a queen indeed. Comrades, I thank you for your loyalty, And take and wear this symbol of your love;

And were my kindly father sound again, Could live as happy as the larks in heaven,

And join your feasts and all your forest games

As far as maiden might. Farewell, good fellows!

*[Exeunt several foresters, the others withdraw to the back.]*

*Robin.* Sit here by me, where the most beaten track

Runs thro' the forest, hundreds of huge oaks,

Gnarl'd—older than the thrones of Europe—look,

What breadth, height, strength—torrents of eddying bark!

Some hollow-hearted from exceeding age—

That never be thy lot or mine!—and some

Pillaring a leaf-sky on their monstrous boles,

Sound at the core as we are. Fifty leagues

Of woodland bear and know my horn, that scares

The Baron at the torture of his churls, The pillage of his vassals.

O maiden-wife, The oppression of our people moves me so, That when I think of it hotly, Love himself

Seems but a ghost, but when thou feel'st with me

The ghost returns to Marian, clothes itself

In maiden flesh and blood, and looks at once

Maid Marian, and that maiden freedom which

Would never brook the tyrant. Live thou maiden!

Thou art more my wife so feeling, than if my wife

And siding with these proud priests, and these Barons,

Devils, that make this blessed England hell.

*Marian.* Earl—

*Robin.* Nay, no Earl am I. I am English yeoman.

*Marian.* Then I am yeo-woman. O the clumsy word!

*Robin.* Take thou this light kiss for thy clumsy word.

Kiss me again.

*Marian.* Robin, I will not kiss thee, For that belongs to marriage; but I hold thee

The husband of my heart, the noblest light

That ever flash'd across my life, and I Embrace thee with the kisses of the soul.

*Robin.* I thank thee.

*Marian.* Scarlet told me —is it true?—

That John last week return'd to Nottingham,

And all the foolish world is pressing thither.

*Robin.* Sit here, my queen, and judge the world with me.

Doubtless, like judges of another bench, However wise, we must at times have wrought

Some great injustice, yet, far as we knew, We never robb'd one friend of the true King.

We robb'd the traitors that are leagued with John;

We robb'd the lawyer who went against the law;

We spared the craftsman, chapman, all that live

By their own hands, the labourer, the poor priest;

We spoil'd the prior, friar, abbot, monk, For playing upside down with Holy Writ.

'Sell all thou hast and give it to the poor;'

Take all they have and give it to thyself!

Then after we have eased them of their  
coins

It is our forest custom they should revel  
Along with Robin.

*Marian.* And if a woman pass—

*Robin.* Dear, in these days of Nor-  
man license, when

Our English maidens are their prey, if  
ever

A Norman damsel fell into our hands,  
In this dark wood when all was in our  
power

We never wrong'd a woman.

*Marian.* Noble Robin.

*Little John (coming forward).* Here  
come three beggars.

*Enter the three BEGGARS.*

*Little John.* Toll!

*First Beggar.* Eh! we be beggars,  
we come to ask o' you. We ha' nothing.

*Second Beggar.* Rags, nothing but  
our rags.

*Third Beggar.* I have but one penny  
in pouch, and so you would make it two  
I should be grateful.

*Marian.* Beggars, you are sturdy  
rogues that should be set to work. You  
are those that tramp the country, filch  
the linen from the hawthorn, poison the  
house-dog, and scare lonely maidens at  
the farmstead. Search them, Little John.

*Little John.* These two have forty  
gold marks between them, Robin.

*Robin.* Cast them into our treasury,  
the beggars' mites. Part shall go to the  
almshouses at Nottingham, part to the  
shrine of our Lady. Search this other.

*Little John.* He hath, as he said, but  
one penny.

*Robin.* Leave it with him and add a  
gold mark thereto. He hath spoken  
truth in a world of lies.

*Third Beggar.* I thank you, my lord.

*Little John.* A fine, a fine! he hath  
called plain Robin a lord. How much  
for a beggar?

*Robin.* Take his penny and leave him  
his gold mark.

*Little John.* Sit there, knaves, till the  
captain call for you.

[*They pass behind the trunk of an  
oak on the right.*]

*Marian.* Art thou not hard upon  
them, my good Robin?

*Robin.* They might be harder upon  
thee, if met in a black lane at midnight:  
the throat might gape before the tongue  
could cry who?

*Little John.* Here comes a citizen,  
and I think his wife.

*Enter CITIZEN and WIFE.*

*Citizen.* That business which we have  
in Nottingham—

*Little John.* Halt!

*Citizen.* O dear wife, we  
have fallen into the hands

Of Robin Hood.

*Marian.* And Robin Hood hath  
sworn—

Shame on thee, Little John, thou hast  
forgotten—

That by the blessed Mother no man, so  
His own true wife came with him, should  
be stay'd

From passing onward. Fare you well,  
fair lady! [*Bowing to her.*]

*Robin.* And may your business thrive  
in Nottingham!

*Citizen.* I thank you, noble sir, the  
very blossom

Of bandits. Courtesy to him, wife, and  
thank him.

*Wife.* I thank you, noble sir, and will  
pray for you

That you may thrive, but in some kindlier  
trade.

*Citizen.* Away, away, wife, wilt thou  
anger him?

[*Exeunt Citizen and his Wife.*]

*Little John.* Here come three friars.

*Robin.* Marian, thou and thy woman  
(*looking round*), Why, where is Kate?

*Marian (calling).* Kate!

*Kate.* Here!

*Robin.* Thou and thy woman are a  
match for three friars. Take thou my bow  
and arrow and compel them to pay toll.

*Marian.* Toll!

*Enter three FRIARS.*

*First Friar (advancing).* Behold a  
pretty Dian of the wood,  
Prettier than that same widow which you  
wot of.

Ha, brother. Toll, my dear? the toll of love.

*Marian (drawing bow).* Back! how much money hast thou in thy purse?

*First Friar.* Thou art playing with us. How should poor friars have money?

*Marian.* How much? how much? Speak, or the arrow flies.

*First Friar.* How much? well, now I bethink me, I have one mark in gold which a pious son of the Church gave me this morning on my setting forth.

*Marian (bending bow at the second).* And thou?

*Second Friar.* Well, as he said, one mark in gold.

*Marian (bending bow at the third).* And thou?

*Third Friar.* One mark in gold.

*Marian.* Search them, Kate, and see if they have spoken truth.

*Kate.* They are all mark'd men. They have told but a tenth of the truth: they have each ten marks in gold.

*Marian.* Leave them each what they say is theirs, and take the twenty-seven marks to the captain's treasury. Sit there till you be called for.

*First Friar.* We have fall'n into the hands of Robin Hood.

[*Marian and Kate return to Robin.*

[*The Friars pass behind an oak on the left.*

*Robin.* Honour to thee, brave Marian, and thy Kate.

I know them arrant knaves in Nottingham.

One half of this shall go to those they have wrong'd,

One half shall pass into our treasury. Where lies that cask of wine whereof we plunder'd

The Norman prelate?

*Little John.* In that oak, where twelve can stand upright, nor touch each other.

*Robin.* Good!

Roll it in here. These friars, thieves, and liars, shall drink the health of our new woodland Queen.

And they shall pledge thee, Marian, loud enough

To fright the wild swan passing overhead,

The mouldwarp underfoot.

*Marian.* They pledge me, Robin? The silent blessing of one honest man is heard in heaven—the wassail yells of thief

And rogue and liar echo down in Hell, And wake the Devil, and I may sicken by 'em.

Well, well, be it so, thou strongest thief of all,

For thou hast stolen my will, and made it thine.

FRIAR TUCK, LITTLE JOHN, MUCH, and SCARLET roll in cask.

*Friar Tuck.* I marvel is it sack or Malvoisie?

*Robin.* Do me the service to tap it, and thou wilt know.

*Friar Tuck.* I would tap myself in thy service, Robin.

*Robin.* And thou wouldst run more wine than blood.

*Friar Tuck.* And both at thy service, Robin.

*Robin.* I believe thee, thou art a good fellow, though a friar.

[*They pour the wine into cups.*

*Friar Tuck.* Fill to the brim. Our Robin, King o' the woods,

Wherever the horn sound, and the buck bound,

Robin, the people's friend, the King o' the woods. [*They drink.*

*Robin.* To the brim and over till the green earth drink

Her health along with us in this rich draught,

And answer it in flowers. The Queen o' the woods,

Wherever the buck bound, and the horn sound,

Maid Marian, Queen o' the woods!

[*They drink.*

Here, you three rogues,

[*To the Beggars. They come out.*

You caught a lonely woodman of our band,

And bruised him almost to the death, and took

His monies.

*Third Beggar.* Captain, nay, it wasn't me.

*Robin.* You ought to dangle up there among the crows.

Drink to the health of our new Queen o' the woods.

Or else be bound and beaten.

*First Beggar.* Sir, sir—well, We drink the health of thy new Queen o' the woods.

*Robin.* Louder! louder! Maid Marian, Queen o' the woods!

*Beggars (shouting).* Maid Marian, Queen o' the woods: Queen o' the woods.

*First and Second Beggars (aside).* The black fiend grip her!

[*They drink.*]

*Robin (to the Friars).* And you three holy men,

[*They come out.*]

You worshippers of the Virgin, one of you Shamed a too trustful widow whom you heard

In her confession; and another—worse!—

An innocent maid. Drink to the Queen o' the woods,

Or else be bound and beaten.

*First Friar.* Robin Hood, These be the lies the people tell of us, Because we seek to curb their viciousness.

However—to this maid, this Queen o' the woods.

*Robin.* Louder, louder, ye knaves. Maid Marian!

Queen o' the woods!

*Friars (shouting).* Maid Marian, Queen o' the woods.

*First Friar (aside).* Maid?

*Second Friar (aside).* Paramour!

*Third Friar (aside).* Hell take her!

[*They drink.*]

*Friar Tuck.* Robin, will you not hear one of these beggars' catches? They can do it. I have heard 'em in the market at Mansfield.

*Little John.* No, my lord, hear ours—Robin—I crave pardon, I always think of you as my lord, but I may still say my lady; and, my lady, Kate and I have fallen out again, and I pray you to come between us again, for, my lady, we have

made a song in your honour, so your ladyship care to listen.

*Robin.* Sing, and by St. Mary these beggars and these friars shall join you. Play the air, Little John.

*Little John.* Air and word, my lady, are maid and man. Join them and they are a true marriage; and so, I pray you, my lady, come between me and my Kate and make us one again. Scarlet, begin.

[*Playing the air on his viol.*]

*Scarlet.*

By all the deer that spring  
Thro' wood and lawn and ling,  
When all the leaves are green;  
By arrow and gray goosewing,  
When horn and echo ring,  
We care so much for a King;  
We care not much for a Queen—  
For a Queen, for a Queen o' the woods.

*Marian.* Do you call that in my honour?

*Scarlet.* Bitters before dinner, my lady, to give you a relish. The first part—made before you came among us—they put it upon me because I have a bad wife. I love you all the same. Proceed.

[*All the rest sing.*]

By all the leaves of spring,  
And all the birds that sing  
When all the leaves are green;  
By arrow and by bowstring,  
We care so much for a King  
That we would die for a Queen—  
For a Queen, for a Queen o' the woods.

*Enter FORESTER.*

*Forester.* Black news, black news from Nottingham! I grieve I am the Raven who croaks it. My lord John, In wrath because you drove him from the forest, Is coming with a swarm of mercenaries To break our band and scatter us to the winds.

*Marian.* O Robin, Robin! See that men be set Along the glades and passes of the wood To warn us of his coming! then each man That owns a wife or daughter, let him bury her

Even in the bowels of the earth to scape The glance of John—

*Robin.* You hear your Queen, obey!

## ACT IV.—THE CONCLUSION.

## ACT IV.

SCENE.—A FOREST BOWER, CAVERN IN BACKGROUND. SUNRISE.

*Marian* (rising to meet Robin). Robin, the sweet light of a mother's eye, That beam of dawn upon the opening flower,  
Has never glanced upon me when a child. He was my father, mother, both in one. The love that children owe to both I give To him alone.

(ROBIN offers to caress her.)

*Marian*. Quiet, good Robin, quiet! You lovers are such clumsy summer-flies For ever buzzing at your lady's face.

*Robin*. Bees rather, flying to the flower for honey.

*Marian* (sings).

The bee buzz'd up in the heat.  
'I am faint for your honey, my sweet.'  
The flower said 'Take it, my dear,  
For now is the spring of the year.  
So come, come!'

'Hum!'  
And the bee buzz'd down from the heat.

And the bee buzz'd up in the cold  
When the flower was wither'd and old.  
'Have you still any honey, my dear?'  
She said 'It's the fall of the year,  
But come, come!'  
'Hum!'

And the bee buzz'd off in the cold.

*Robin*. Out on thy song!*Marian*. Did I not sing it in tune?*Robin*. No, sweetheart! out of tune with Love and me.*Marian*. And yet in tune with Nature and the bees.*Robin*. Out on it, I say, as out of tune and time!*Marian*. Till thou thyself shalt come to sing it—in time.

*Robin* (taking a tress of her hair in his hand). Time! if his backward-working alchemy Should change this gold to silver, why, the silver Were dear as gold, the wrinkle as the dimple.

Thy bee should buzz about the Court of John.

No ribald John is Love, no wanton Prince,

The ruler of an hour, but lawful King,  
Whose writ will run thro' all the range of life.

Out upon all hard-hearted maidenhood!  
*Marian*. And out upon all simple batchelors!

Ah, well! thou seest the land has come between us,

And my sick father here has come between us,

And this rich Sheriff too has come between us;

So, is it not all over now between us?

Gone, like a deer that hath escaped thine arrow!

*Robin*. What deer when I have mark'd him ever yet

Escaped mine arrow? over is it? wilt thou Give me thy hand on that?

*Marian*. Take it.

*Robin* (kisses her hand). The Sheriff! This ring cries out against thee. Say it again,

And by this ring the lips that never breathed

Love's falsehood to true maid will seal  
Love's truth

On those sweet lips that dare to dally with it.

*Marian*. Quiet, quiet! or I will to my father.

*Robin*. So, then, thy father will not grace our feast  
With his white beard to-day.

*Marian*. Being so sick  
How should he, Robin?

*Robin*. Then that bond he hath Of the Abbot—wilt thou ask him for it?

*Marian*. Why?

*Robin*. I have sent to the Abbot and justiciary  
To bring their counter-bond into the forest.

*Marian*. But will they come?

*Robin*. If not I have let them know  
Their lives unsafe in any of these our woods,

And in the winter I will fire their farms.  
But I have sworn by our Lady if they come



I will not tear the bond, but see fair play  
Betwixt them and Sir Richard—promised  
too,

So that they deal with us like honest men,  
They shall be handled with all courtesous-  
ness.

*Marian.* What wilt thou do with the  
bond then?

*Robin.* Wait and see.

What wilt thou do with the Sheriff?

*Marian.* Wait and see.

I bring the bond. [*Exit Marian.*]

*Enter* LITTLE JOHN, FRIAR TUCK, and  
MUCH, and FORESTERS and PEASANTS  
*laughing and talking.*

*Robin.* Have you glanced down thro'  
all the forest ways  
And mark'd if those two knaves from  
York be coming?

*Little John.* Not yet, but here comes  
one of bigger mould.

*Enter* KING RICHARD.

Art thou a knight?

*King Richard.* I am.

*Robin.* And walkest here  
Unarmour'd? all these walks are Robin  
Hood's

And sometimes perilous.

*King Richard.* Good! but having lived  
For twenty days and nights in mail, at  
last

I crawl'd like a sick crab from my old  
shell,

That I might breathe for a moment free  
of shield

And cuirass in this forest where I dream'd  
That all was peace—not even a Robin  
Hood—

(*Aside*) What if these knaves should  
know me for their King?

*Robin.* Art thou for Richard, or allied  
to John?

*King Richard.* I am allied to John.

*Robin.* The worse for thee.

*King Richard.* Art thou that banish'd  
lord of Huntingdon,

The chief of these outlaws who break the  
law?

*Robin.* I am the yeoman, plain Robin  
Hood, and being out of the law how  
should we break the law? if we broke

into it again we should break the law,  
and then we were no longer outlaws.

*King Richard.* But, Earl, if thou be  
he—

*Friar Tuck.* Fine him! fine him! he  
hath called plain Robin an earl. How  
much is it, Robin, for a knight?

*Robin.* A mark.

*King Richard (gives it).* There.

*Robin.* Thou payest easily, like a good  
fellow,

But being o' John's side we must have  
thy gold.

*King Richard.* But I am more for  
Richard than for John.

*Robin.* What, what, a truckler! a  
word-eating coward!

Nay, search him then. How much hast  
thou about thee?

*King Richard.* I had one mark.

*Robin.* What more?

*King Richard.* No more, I think.  
But how then if I will not bide to be  
search'd?

*Robin.* We are four to one.

*King Richard.* And I might  
deal with four.

*Robin.* Good, good, I love thee for  
that! but if I wind

This forest-horn of mine I can bring down  
Fourscore tall fellows on thee.

*King Richard.* Search me then.  
I should be hard beset with thy fourscore.

*Little John (searching King Richard).*

Robin, he hath no more. He hath  
spoken truth.

*Robin.* I am glad of it. Give him  
back his gold again.

*King Richard.* But I had liefer than  
this gold again—

Not having broken fast the livelong  
day—

Something to eat.

*Robin.* And thou shalt have it, man.  
Our feast is yonder, spread beneath an  
oak,

Venison, and wild boar, wild goose, be-  
sides

Hedge-pigs, a savoury viand, so thou be  
Squeamish at eating the King's venison.

*King Richard.* Nay, Robin, I am like  
thyself in that

I look on the King's venison as my own.



*Friar Tuck.* Ay, ay, Robin, but let him know our forest laws: he that pays not for his dinner must fight for it. In the sweat of thy brow, says Holy Writ, shalt thou eat bread, but in the sweat of thy brow and thy breast, and thine arms, and thy legs, and thy heart, and thy liver, and in the fear of thy life shalt thou eat the King's venison—ay, and so thou fight at quarterstaff for thy dinner with our Robin, that will give thee a new zest for it, though thou wert like a bottle full up to the cork, or as hollow as a kex, or the shambles-oak, or a weasel-sucked egg, or the head of a fool, or the heart of Prince John, or any other symbol of vacuity.

[*They bring out the quarterstuffs, and the foresters and peasants crowd round to see the games, and applaud at intervals.*]

*King Richard.* Great woodland king,  
I know not quarterstaff.

*Little John.* A fine! a fine! He hath called plain Robin a king.

*Robin.* A shadow, a poetical fiction—did ye not call me king in your song?—a mere figure. Let it go by.

*Friar Tuck.* No figure, no fiction, Robin. What, is not man a hunting animal? And look you now, if we kill a stag, our dogs have their paws cut off, and the hunters, if caught, are blinded, or worse than blinded. Is that to be a king? If the king and the law work injustice, is not he that goes against the king and the law the true king in the sight of the King of kings? Thou art the king of the forest, and I would thou wert the king of the land.

*King Richard.* This friar is of much boldness, noble captain.

*Robin.* He hath got it from the bottle, noble knight.

*Friar Tuck.* Boldness out of the bottle! I defy thee.  
Boldness is in the blood, Truth in the bottle.

She lay so long at the bottom of her well  
In the cold water that she lost her voice,  
And so she glided up into the heart  
O' the bottle, the warm wine, and found  
it again.

*In vino veritas.* Shall I undertake  
The knight at quarterstaff, or thou?

*Robin.* Peace, magpie!  
Give him the quarterstaff. Nay, but thyself

Shalt play a bout with me, that he may see  
The fashion of it.

[*Plays with Little John at quarterstaff.*  
*King Richard.* Well, then, let me try.

[*They play.*]  
I yield, I yield. I know no quarterstaff.

*Robin.* Then thou shalt play the game  
of buffets with us.

*King Richard.* What's that?

*Robin.* I stand up here, thou there.  
I give thee

A buffet, and thou me. The Holy Virgin  
Stand by the strongest. I am over-  
breathed,

Friar, by my two bouts at quarterstaff.  
Take him and try him, friar.

*Friar Tuck.* There! [*Strikes.*]

*King Richard (strikes).* There!

[*Friar falls.*]  
*Friar Tuck.* There!

Thou hast roll'd over the Church militant  
Like a tod of wool from wagon into ware-  
house.

Nay, I defy thee still. Try me an hour  
hence.

I am misty with my thimbleful of ale.

*Robin.* Thou seest, Sir Knight, our  
friar is so holy

That he's a miracle-monger, and can  
make

Five quarts pass into a thimble. Up,  
good Much.

*Friar Tuck.* And show thyself more  
of a man than me.

*Much.* Well, no man yet has ever  
bowl'd me down.

*Scarlet.* Ay, for old Much is every  
inch a man.

*Robin.* We should be all the more  
beholden to him.

*Much.* Much and more! much and  
more! I am the oldest of thy men, and  
thou and thy youngsters are always much-  
ing and moreing me.

*Robin.* Because thou art always so  
much more of a man than my youngsters,  
old Much.

*Much.* Well, we Muches be old.

*Robin.* Old as the hills.

*Much.* Old as the mill. We had it i' the Red King's time, and so I *may* be more of a man than to be bowled over like a ninepin. There! [*Strikes.*]

*King Richard.* There! [*Much falls.*]

*Robin.* 'Much would have more,' says the proverb; but Much hath had more than enough. Give me thy hand, Much; I love thee (*lifts him up*). At him, Scarlet!

*Scarlet.* I cannot cope with him: my wrist is strain'd.

*King Richard.* Try, thyself, valorous Robin!

*Robin.* I am mortally afraid o' thee, thou big man,  
But seeing valour is one against all odds,  
There!

*King Richard.* There!

[*Robin falls back, and is caught in the arms of Little John.*]

*Robin.* Good, now I love thee mightily, thou tall fellow.  
Break thine alliance with this faithless John,

And live with us and the birds in the green wood.

*King Richard.* I cannot break it, Robin, if I wish'd.

Still I am more for Richard than for John.

*Little John.* Look, Robin, at the far end of the glade

I see two figures crawling up the hill.

[*Distant sound of trumpets.*]

*Robin.* The Abbot of York and his justiciary.

*King Richard (aside).* They know me. I must not as yet be known. Friends, your free sports have swallow'd my free hour.

Farewell at once, for I must hence upon The King's affair.

*Robin.* Not taste his venison first?

*Friar Tuck.* Hast thou not fought for it, and earn'd it? Stay,

Dine with my brethren here, and on thine own,

*King Richard.* And which be they?

*Friar Tuck.* Wild geese, for how canst thou be thus allied

With John, and serve King Richard save thou be

A traitor or a goose? but stay with Robin; For Robin is no scatterbrains like Richard,

Robin's a wise man, Richard a wiseacre, Robin's an outlaw, but he helps the poor. While Richard hath outlaw'd himself, and helps

Nor rich, nor poor. Richard's the king of courtesy,

For if he did me the good grace to kick me

I could but sneak and smile and call it courtesy,

For he's a king.

And that is only courtesy *by* courtesy—

But Robin is a thief of courtesy

Whom they that suffer by him call the blossom

Of bandits. There—to be a thief of courtesy—

There is a trade of genius, there's glory! Again, this Richard sacks and wastes a town

With random pillage, but our Robin takes From whom he knows are hypocrites and liars.

Again this Richard risks his life for a straw,

So lies in prison—while our Robin's life Hangs by a thread, but he is a free man.

Richard, again, is king over a realm

He hardly knows, and Robin king of Sherwood,

And loves and doats on every dingle of it.

Again this Richard is the lion of Cyprus, Robin, the lion of Sherwood—may this mouth

Never suck grape again, if our true Robin Be not the nobler lion of the twain.

*King Richard.* Gramercy for thy preachment! if the land

Were ruleable by tongue, thou shouldst be king.

And yet thou know'st how little of thy king!

What was this realm of England, all the crowns

Of all this world, to Richard when he flung

His life, heart, soul into those holy wars

That sought to free the tomb-place of the King

Of all the world? thou, that art churchman too  
In a fashion, and shouldst feel with him.  
Farewell!

I left mine horse and armour with a Squire,

And I must see to 'em.

*Robin.* When wilt thou return?

*King Richard.* Return, I? when? when Richard will return.

*Robin.* No sooner? when will that be? canst thou tell?

But I have ta'en a sudden fancy to thee.  
Accept this horn! if e'er thou be assail'd  
In any of our forests, blow upon it  
Three mots, this fashion—listen! (*blows*)  
Canst thou do it?

[*King Richard blows.*]

Blown like a true son of the woods.  
Farewell!

[*Exit King Richard.*]

*Enter* ABBOT and JUSTICIARY.

*Friar Tuck.* Church and Law, halt and pay toll!

*Justiciary.* Rogue, we have thy captain's safe-conduct; though he be the chief of rogues, he hath never broken his word.

*Abbot.* There is our bond.

[*Gives it to Robin.*]

*Robin.* I thank thee.

*Justiciary.* Ay, but where, Where is this old Sir Richard of the Lea? Thou told'st us we should meet him in the forest,

Where he would pay us down his thousand marks.

*Robin.* Give him another month, and he will pay it.

*Justiciary.* We cannot give a month.

*Robin.* Why then a week.

*Justiciary.* No, not an hour: the debt is due to-day.

*Abbot.* Where is this laggard Richard of the Lea?

*Robin.* He hath been hurt, was growing whole again,  
Only this morning in his agony  
Lest he should fail to pay these thousand marks

He is stricken with a slight paralysis.  
Have you no pity? must you see the man?

*Justiciary.* Ay, ay, what else? how else can this be settled?

*Robin.* Go men, and fetch him hither on the litter.

[*Sir Richard Lea is brought in. Marian comes with him.*]

*Marian.* Here is my father's bond.

[*Gives it to Robin Hood.*]

*Robin.* I thank thee, dear.

*Justiciary.* Sir Richard, it was agreed when you borrowed these monies from the Abbot that if they were not repaid within a limited time your land should be forfeit.

*Sir Richard.* The land! the land!

*Marian.* You see he is past himself. What would you more?

*Abbot.* What more? one thousand marks,

Or else the land.

You hide this damsel in your forest here,

[*Pointing to Marian.*]

You hope to hold and keep her for yourself,

You heed not how you soil her maiden fame,

You scheme against her father's weal and hers,

For so this maid would wed our brother, he

Would pay us all the debt at once, and thus This old Sir Richard might redeem his land.

He is all for love, he cares not for the land.

*Sir Richard.* The land! the land!

*Robin (giving two bags to the Abbot).* Here be one thousand marks

Out of our treasury to redeem the land.

[*Pointing to each of the bags.*]

Half here, half there.

[*Plaudits from his band.*]

*Justiciary.* Ay, ay, but there is use, four hundred marks.

*Robin (giving a bag to Justiciary).* There then, four hundred marks.

[*Plaudits.*]

*Justiciary.* What did I say? Nay, my tongue tript—five hundred marks for use.

*Robin (giving another bag to him).* A hundred more? There then, a hundred more.

[*Plaudits.*]

*Justiciary.* Ay, ay, but you see the bond and the letter of the law. It is stated there that these monies should be paid in to the Abbot at York, at the end of the month at noon, and they are delivered here in the wild wood an hour after noon.

*Marian.* The letter—O how often justice drowns  
Between the law and letter of the law!  
O God, I would the letter of the law  
Were some strong fellow here in the wild wood,  
That thou might'st beat him down at quarterstaff!  
Have you no pity?

*Justiciary.* You run down your game,  
We ours. What pity have you for your game?

*Robin.* We needs must live. Our bowmen are so true  
They strike the deer at once to death—he falls  
And knows no more.

*Marian.* Pity, pity!—There was a man of ours  
Up in the north, a goodly fellow too,  
He met a stag there on so narrow a ledge—

A precipice above, and one below—  
There was no room to advance or to retire.

The man lay down—the delicate-footed creature  
Came stepping o'er him, so as not to harm him—

The hunter's passion flash'd into the man,  
He drove his knife into the heart of the deer,

The deer fell dead to the bottom, and the man  
Fell with him, and was crippled ever after.

I fear I had small pity for that man.—  
You have the monies and the use of them.  
What would you more?

*Justiciary.* What? must we dance attendance all the day?

*Robin.* Dance! ay, by all the saints and all the devils ye shall dance. When the Church and the law have forgotten God's music, they shall dance to the music of the wild wood. Let the birds

sing, and do you dance to their song. What, you will not? Strike up our music, Little John. (*He plays.*) They will not! Prick 'em in the calves with the arrow-points—prick 'em in the calves.

*Abbot.* Rogue, I am full of gout. I cannot dance.

*Robin.* And Sir Richard cannot redeem his land. Sweat out your gout, friend, for by my life, you shall dance till he can. Prick him in the calves!

*Justiciary.* Rogue, I have a swollen vein in my right leg, and if thou prick me there I shall die.

*Robin.* Prick him where thou wilt, so that he dance.

*Abbot.* Rogue, we come not alone.

*Justiciary.* Not the right.

*Abbot.* We told the Prince and the Sheriff of our coming.

*Justiciary.* Take the left leg for the love of God.

*Abbot.* They follow us.

*Justiciary.* You will all of you hang.

*Robin.* Let us hang, so thou dance meanwhile; or by that same love of God we will hang *thee*, prince or no prince, sheriff or no sheriff.

*Justiciary.* Take care, take care! I dance—I will dance—I dance.

[*Abbot and Justiciary dance to music, each holding a bag in each hand.*]

*Enter SCARLET.*

*Scarlet.* The Sheriff! the Sheriff, follow'd by Prince John  
And all his mercenaries! We sighted 'em

Only this moment. By St. Nicholas  
They must have sprung like Ghosts from underground,  
Or, like the Devils they are, straight up from Hell.

*Robin.* Crouch all into the bush!

[*The foresters and peasants hide behind the bushes.*]

*Marian.* Take up the litter!

*Sir Richard.* Move me no more! I am sick and faint with pain!

*Marian.* But, Sir, the Sheriff—

*Sir Richard.* Let me be, I say!  
The Sheriff will be welcome! let me be!

*Marian.* Give me my bow and arrows.

I remain

Beside my Father's litter.

*Robin.* And fear not thou!  
Each of us has an arrow on the cord;  
We all keep watch.

*Enter* SHERIFF OF NOTTINGHAM.

*Sheriff.* Marian!

*Marian.* Speak not. I wait upon a  
dying father.

*Sheriff.* The debt hath not been paid.  
She will be mine.

What are you capering for? By old St.  
Vitus

Have you gone mad? Has it been paid?

*Abbot (dancing).* O yes.

*Sheriff.* Have I lost her then?

*Justiciary (dancing).* Lost her?

O no, we took

Advantage of the letter—O Lord, the  
vein!

Not paid at York—the wood—prick me  
no more!

*Sheriff.* What pricks thee save it be  
thy conscience, man?

*Justiciary.* By my halidome I felt  
him at my leg still. Where be they  
gone to?

*Sheriff.* Thou art alone in the silence  
of the forest

Save for this maiden and thy brother  
Abbot,

And this old crazeling in the litter there.

*Enter on one side* FRIAR TUCK *from the  
bush, and on the other* PRINCE JOHN  
*and his* SPEARMEN, *with banners and  
trumpets, etc.*

*Justiciary (examining his leg).* They  
have missed the vein.

*Abbot.* And we shall keep the land.

*Sheriff.* Sweet Marian, by the letter  
of the law

It seems thy father's land is forfeited.

*Sir Richard.* No! let me out of the  
litter. He shall wed thee:

The land shall still be mine. Child, thou  
shalt wed him,

Or thine old father will go mad—he  
will,

He will—he feels it in his head.

*Marian.* O peace!

Father, I cannot marry till Richard  
comes.

*Sir Richard.* And then the Sheriff!

*Marian.* Ay, the Sheriff, father,  
Would buy me for a thousand marks in  
gold—

Sell me again perchance for twice as  
much.

A woman's heart is but a little thing,  
Much lighter than a thousand marks in  
gold;

But pity for a father, it may be,  
Is weightier than a thousand marks in  
gold.

I cannot love the Sheriff.

*Sir Richard.* But thou wilt wed  
him?

*Marian.* Ay, save King Richard,  
when he comes, forbid me.

Sweet heavens, I could wish that all the  
land

Were plunged beneath the waters of the  
sea,

Tho' all the world should go about in  
boats.

*Friar Tuck.* Why, so should all the  
love-sick be sea-sick.

*Marian.* Better than heart-sick, friar.

*Prince John (to Sheriff).* See you not  
They are jesting at us yonder, mocking  
us?

Carry her off, and let the old man die.

[*Advancing to Marian.*

Come, girl, thou shalt along with us 'on  
the instant.

*Friar Tuck (brandishing his staff).*  
Then on the instant I will break  
thy head.

*Sheriff.* Back, thou fool-friar!  
Knowest thou not the Prince?

*Friar Tuck (muttering).* He may be  
prince; he is not gentleman.

*Prince John.* Look! I will take the  
rope from off thy waist

And twist it round thy neck and hang  
thee by it.

Seize him and truss him up, and carry  
her off.

[*Friar Tuck slips into the bush.*

*Marian (drawing the bow).* No nearer  
to me! back! My hand is firm,

Mine eye most true to one hair's-breadth  
of aim.



You, Prince, our king to come—you that dishonour

The daughters and the wives of your own faction—

Who hunger for the body, not the soul—  
This gallant Prince would have me of his—what?

Household? or shall I call it by that new term

Brought from the sacred East, his harem?  
Never,

Tho' you should queen me over all the realms

Held by King Richard, could I stoop so low

As mate with one that holds no love is pure,

No friendship sacred, values neither man  
Nor woman save as tools—God help the mark—

To his own unprincely ends. And you, you, Sheriff,

[Turning to the Sheriff.

Who thought to buy your marrying me with gold,

Marriage is of the soul, not of the body.  
Win me you cannot, murder me you may,  
And all I love, Robin, and all his men,  
For I am one with him and his; but while

I breathe Heaven's air, and Heaven looks down on me,

And smiles at my best meanings, I remain  
Mistress of mine own self and mine own soul.

[Retreating, with bow drawn, to the bush.  
Robin!

Robin. I am here, my arrow on the cord.

He dies who dares to touch thee.

Prince John. Advance, advance!  
What, daunted by a garrulous, arrogant girl!

Seize her and carry her off into my castle.  
Sheriff. Thy castle!

Prince John. Said I not, I loved thee, man?

Risk not the love I bear thee for a girl.  
Sheriff. Thy castle!

Prince John. See thou thwart me not, thou fool!

When Richard comes he is soft enough to pardon

His brother; but all those that held with him,

Except I plead for them, will hang as high  
As Haman.

Sheriff. She is mine. I have thy promise.

Prince John. O ay, she shall be thine—  
—first mine, then thine,

For she shall spend her honeymoon with me.

Sheriff. Woe to that land shall own thee for her king!

Prince John. Advance, advance!

[They advance shouting. The King in armour reappears from the wood.

King Richard. What shouts are these that ring along the wood?

Friar Tuck (coming forward). Hail, knight, and help us. Here is one would clutch

Our pretty Marian for his paramour,  
This other, willy-nilly, for his bride.

King Richard. Damsel, is this the truth?

Marian. Ay, noble knight.

Friar Tuck. Ay, and she will not marry till Richard come.

King Richard (raising his vizor). I am here, and I am he.

Prince John (lowering his, and whispering to his men). It is not he—his face—tho' very like—

No, no! we have certain news he died in prison.

Make at him, all of you, a traitor coming  
In Richard's name—it is not he—not he.

[The men stand amazed.

Friar Tuck (going back to the bush).  
Robin, shall we not move?

Robin. It is the King  
Who bears all down. Let him alone awhile.

He loves the chivalry of his single arm.  
Wait till he blow the horn.

Friar Tuck (coming back). If thou be king,

Be not a fool! Why blowest thou not the horn?

King Richard. I that have turn'd  
their Moslem crescent pale—

I blow the horn against this rascal rout!



[Friar Tuck *plucks the horn from him and blows.* Richard *dashes alone against the Sheriff and John's men, and is almost borne down, when Robin and his men rush in and rescue him.*

*King Richard* (to Robin Hood). Thou hast saved my head at the peril of thine own.

*Prince John.* A horse! a horse! I must away at once;

I cannot meet his eyes. I go to Nottingham.

Sheriff, thou wilt find me at Nottingham. [Exit.

*Sheriff.* If anywhere, I shall find thee in hell.

What! go to slay his brother, and make me

The monkey that should roast his chestnuts for him!

*King Richard.* I fear to ask who left us even now.

*Robin.* I grieve to say it was thy father's son.

Shall I not after him and bring him back?

*King Richard.* No, let him be. Sheriff of Nottingham,

[*Sheriff kneels.*

I have been away from England all these years,

Heading the holy war against the Moslem, While thou and others in our kingless realms

Were fighting underhand unholy wars Against your lawful king.

*Sheriff.* My liege, Prince John—

*King Richard.* Say thou no word against my brother John.

*Sheriff.* Why then, my liege, I have no word to say.

*King Richard* (to Robin). My good friend Robin, Earl of Huntingdon, For Earl thou art again, hast thou no fetters

For those of thine own band who would betray thee?

*Robin.* I have; but these were never worn as yet.

I never found one traitor in my band.

*King Richard.* Thou art happier than thy king. Put him in chains.

[*They fetter the Sheriff.*

*Robin.* Look o'er these bonds, my liege.

[*Shows the King the bonds. They talk together.*

*King Richard.* You, my lord Abbot, you Justiciary,

[*The Abbot and Justiciary kneel.*

I made you Abbot, you Justiciary:

You both are utter traitors to your king.

*Justiciary.* O my good liege, we did believe you dead.

*Robin.* Was justice dead—because the King was dead?

Sir Richard paid his monies to the Abbot.

You crosst him with a quibble of your law.

*King Richard.* But on the faith and honour of a king

The land is his again.

*Sir Richard.* The land! the land! I am crazed no longer, so I have the land.

[*Comes out of the litter and kneels.*

God save the King!

*King Richard* (raising Sir Richard).

I thank thee, good Sir Richard.

Maid Marian.

Yes, King Richard.

*King Richard.* Thou wouldst marry This Sheriff when King Richard came again

Except—

*Marian.* The King forbid it. True, my liege.

*King Richard.* How if the King command it

*Marian.* Then, my liege, If you would marry me with a traitor sheriff,

I fear I might prove traitor with the sheriff.

*King Richard.* But if the King forbid thy marrying

With Robin, our good Earl of Huntingdon.

*Marian.* Then will I live for ever in the wild wood.

*Robin* (coming forward). And I with thee.

*King Richard.* On nuts and acorns, ha!

Or the King's deer? Earl, thou when we were hence

Hast broken all our Norman forest-laws, And scruplest not to flaunt it to our face

That thou wilt break our forest laws  
again

When we are here. Thou art overbold.

*Robin.* My king,

I am but the echo of the lips of love.

*King Richard.* Thou hast risk'd thy  
life for mine: bind these two men.

[*They take the bags from the Abbot  
and Justiciary, and proceed to  
fetter them.*]

*Justiciary.* But will the King, then,  
judge us all unheard?

I can defend my cause against the traitors  
Who fain would make me traitor. If the

King

Condemn us without trial, men will call  
him

An Eastern tyrant, not an English king.

*Abbot.* Besides, my liege, these men  
are outlaws, thieves,

They break thy forest laws—nay, by the  
road

They have done far worse—they plunder  
—yea, ev'n bishops,

Yea, ev'n archbishops—if thou side with  
these,

Beware, O King, the vengeance of the  
Church.

*Friar Tuck (brandishing his staff).*

I pray you, my liege, let me execute the  
vengeance of the Church upon them. I  
have a stout crabstick here, which longs  
to break itself across their backs.

*Robin.* Keep silence, bully friar, be-  
fore the King.

*Friar Tuck.* If a cat may look at a  
king, may not a friar speak to one?

*King Richard.* I have had a year of  
prison-silence, Robin,

And heed him not—the vengeance of the  
Church!

Thou shalt pronounce the blessing of the  
Church

On those two here, Robin and Marian.

*Marian.* He is but hedge-priest, Sir  
King.

*King Richard.* And thou their Queen.

Our rebel Abbot then shall join your  
hands,

Or lose all hopes of pardon from us—yet  
Not now, not now—with after-dinner  
grace.

Nay, by the dragon of St. George, we  
shall

Do some injustice, if you hold us here  
Longer from our own venison. Where  
is it?

I scent it in the green leaves of the wood.

*Marian.* First, king, a boon!

*King Richard.* Why surely ye are  
pardon'd,

Even this brawler of harsh truths—I  
trust

Half truths, good friar: ye shall with us  
to court.

Then, if ye cannot breathe but woodland  
air,

Thou Robin shalt be ranger of this forest,  
And have thy fees, and break the law no  
more.

*Marian.* It is not that, my lord.

*King Richard.* Then what, my lady?

*Robin.* This is the gala-day of thy  
return.

I pray thee for the moment, strike the  
bonds

From these three men, and let them dine  
with us,

And lie with us among the flowers, and  
drink—

Ay, whether it be gall or honey to 'em—  
The king's good health in ale and Mal-  
voisie.

*King Richard.* By Mahound I could  
strive with Beelzebub!

So now which way to the dinner?

*Marian.* Past the bank

Of foxglove, then to left by that one yew.  
You see the darkness thro' the lighter  
leaf.

But look! who comes?

*Enter SAILOR.*

*Sailor.* We heard Sir Richard Lea  
was here with Robin,

O good Sir Richard, I am like the man  
In Holy Writ, who brought his talent  
back;

For tho' we touch'd at many pirate ports,  
We ever fail'd to light upon thy son.

Here is thy gold again. I am sorry for it.

*Sir Richard.* The gold—my son—my  
gold, my son, the land—

Here Abbot, Sheriff—no—no, Robin  
Hood,

*Robin.* Sir Richard, let that wait till we have dined.  
Are all our guests here?

*King Richard.* No—there's yet one other:  
I will not dine without him. Come from out

*Enter* WALTER LEA.

That oak-tree! This young warrior broke his prison  
And join'd my banner in the Holy Land,  
And cleft the Moslem turban at my side.

My masters, welcome gallant Walter Lea.  
Kiss him, Sir Richard—kiss him, my sweet Marian.

*Marian.* O Walter, Walter, is it thou indeed

Whose ransom was our ruin, whose return Builds up our house again? I fear I dream.

Here—give me one sharp pinch upon the cheek

That I may feel thou art no phantom—yet

Thou art tann'd almost beyond my knowing, brother. [*They embrace.*]

*Walter Lea.* But thou art fair as ever, my sweet sister.

*Sir Richard.* Art thou my son?

*Walter Lea.* I am, good father, I am.

*Sir Richard.* I had despair'd of thee—that sent me crazed.

Thou art worth thy weight in all those marks of gold,

Yea, and the weight of the very land itself,

Down to the inmost centre.

*Robin.* Walter Lea,  
Give me that hand which fought for Richard there.

Embrace me, Marian, and thou, good Kate,  
[*To Kate entering.*]

Kiss and congratulate me, my good Kate.  
[*She kisses him.*]

*Little John.* Lo now! lo now!  
I have seen thee clasp and kiss a man indeed,

For our brave Robin is a man indeed.  
Then by thine own account thou shouldst be mine.

*Kate.* Well then, who kisses first?

*Little John.* Kiss both together.  
[*They kiss each other.*]

*Robin.* Then all is well. In this full tide of love,

Wave heralds wave: thy match shall follow mine (*to Little John*).

Would there were more—a hundred lovers more

To celebrate this advent of our King!  
Our forest games are ended, our free life,  
And we must hence to the King's court.

I trust

We shall return to the wood. Meanwhile, farewell

Old friends, old patriarch oaks. A thousand winters

Will strip you bare as death, a thousand summers

Robe you life-green again. *You seem, as it were,*

Immortal, and we mortal. How few Junes

Will heat our pulses quicker! How few frosts

Will chill the hearts that beat for Robin Hood!

*Marian.* And yet I think these oaks at dawn and even,

Or in the balmy breathings of the night,  
Will whisper evermore of Robin Hood.

We leave but happy memories to the forest.

We dealt in the wild justice of the woods.  
All those poor serfs whom we have served

will bless us,

All those pale mouths which we have fed will praise us—

All widows we have holpen pray for us,  
Our Lady's blessed shrines throughout the land

Be all the richer for us. You, good friar,

You Much, you Scarlet, you dear Little John,

Your names will cling like ivy to the wood.

And here perhaps a hundred years away

Some hunter in day-dreams or half asleep  
Will hear our arrows whizzing overhead,

And catch the winding of a phantom horn.

*Robin.* And surely these old oaks  
will murmur thee  
Marian along with Robin. I am most  
happy—  
Art thou not mine?—and happy that our  
King  
Is here again, never I trust to roam  
So far again, but dwell among his own.  
Strike up a stave, my masters, all is well.

*Song while they dance a Country Dance.*

Now the king is home again, and nevermore to  
roam again,  
Now the king is home again, the king will have  
his own again,  
Home again, home again, and each will have his  
own again,  
All the birds in merry Sherwood sing and sing  
him home again.

THE  
DEATH OF CENONE,  
AKBAR'S DREAM,  
AND OTHER POEMS

BY  
ALFRED  
LORD TENNYSON  
POET LAUREATE

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THE MACMILLAN COMPANY



THE DEATH OF CENONE,  
AKBAR'S DREAM,  
AND OTHER POEMS.

JUNE BRACKEN AND  
HEATHER.

To —.

THERE on the top of the down,  
The wild heather round me and over me  
June's high blue,  
When I look'd at the bracken so bright  
and the heather so brown,  
I thought to myself I would offer this  
book to you,  
This, and my love together,  
To you that are seventy-seven,  
With a faith as clear as the heights of  
the June-blue heaven,  
And a fancy as summer-new  
As the green of the bracken amid the  
gloom of the heather.

TO THE MASTER OF  
BALLIOL.

I.

DEAR Master in our classic town,  
You, loved by all the younger gown  
There at Balliol,  
Lay your Plato for one minute down,

II.

And read a Grecian tale re-told,  
Which, cast in later Grecian mould,  
Quintus Calaber  
Somewhat lazily handled of old;

III.

And on this white midwinter day—  
For have the far-off hymns of May,  
All her melodies,  
All her harmonies echo'd away?—

IV.

To-day, before you turn again  
To thoughts that lift the soul of men,  
Hear my cataract's  
Downward thunder in hollow and glen,

V.

Till, led by dream and vague desire,  
The woman, gliding toward the pyre,  
Find her warrior  
Stark and dark in his funeral fire.

THE DEATH OF CENONE.\*

CENONE sat within the cave from out  
Whose ivy-matted mouth she used to gaze  
Down at the Troad; but the goodly view  
Was now one blank, and all the serpent  
vines  
Which on the touch of heavenly feet had  
risen,  
And gliding thro' the branches over-  
bower'd  
The naked Three, were wither'd long ago,  
And thro' the sunless winter morning-  
mist  
In silence wept upon the flowerless earth.  
And while she stared at those dead  
cords that ran  
Dark thro' the mist, and linking tree to  
tree,  
But once were gayer than a dawning sky  
With many a pendent bell and fragrant  
star,  
Her Past became her Present, and she  
saw  
Him, climbing toward her with the golden  
fruit,  
Him, happy to be chosen Judge of Gods,  
Her husband in the flush of youth and  
dawn,  
Paris, himself as beauteous as a God.

Anon from out the long ravine below,  
She heard a wailing cry, that seem'd at  
first

Thin as the batlike shrillings of the Dead  
When driven to Hades, but, in coming  
near,

Across the downward thunder of the  
brook

Sounded 'Cenone'; and on a sudden he,  
Paris, no longer beauteous as a God,  
Struck by a poison'd arrow in the fight,  
Lame, crooked, reeling, livid, thro' the  
mist

Rose, like the wraith of his dead self,  
and moan'd

'Cenone, *my* Cenone, while we dwelt  
Together in this valley—happy then—

Too happy had I died within thine arms,  
Before the feud of Gods had marr'd our  
peace,

And sunder'd each from each. I am  
dying now

Pierced by a poison'd dart. Save me.  
Thou knowest,

Taught by some God, whatever herb or  
balm

May clear the blood from poison, and thy  
fame

Is blown thro' all the Troad, and to thee  
The shepherd brings his adder-bitten  
lamb,

The wounded warrior climbs from Troy  
to thee.

My life and death are in thy hand. The  
Gods

Avenge on stony hearts a fruitless prayer  
For pity. Let me owe my life to thee.

I wrought thee bitter wrong, but thou  
forgive,

Forget it. Man is but the slave of Fate.  
Cenone, by thy love which once was  
mine,

Help, heal me. I am poison'd to the  
heart.'

'And I to mine' she said 'Adulterer,  
Go back to thine adulteress and die!'

He groan'd, he turn'd, and in the mist  
at once

Became a shadow, sank and disappear'd,  
But, ere the mountain rolls into the  
plain,

Fell headlong dead; and of the shep-  
herds one

Their oldest, and the same who first had  
found

Paris, a naked babe, among the woods  
Of Ida, following lighted on him there,  
And shouted, and the shepherds heard  
and came.

One raised the Prince, one sleek'd the  
squalid hair,

One kiss'd his hand, another closed his  
eyes,

And then, remembering the gay play-  
mate rear'd

Among them, and forgetful of the man,  
Whose crime had half unpeopled Iliion,  
these

All that day long labour'd, hewing the  
pines,

And built their shepherd-prince a funeral  
pile;

And, while the star of eve was drawing  
light

From the dead sun, kindled the pyre,  
and all

Stood round it, hush'd, or calling on his  
name.

But when the white fog vanish'd like a  
ghost

Before the day, and every topmost pine  
Spired into bluest heaven, still in her  
cave,

Amazed, and ever seeming stared upon  
By ghastlier than the Gorgon head, a  
face,—

*His* face deform'd by lurid blotch and  
blain—

There, like a creature frozen to the heart  
Beyond all hope of warmth, Cenone sat

Not moving, till in front of that ravine  
Which drowsed in gloom, self-darken'd  
from the west, .

The sunset blazed along the wall of Troy.

Then her head sank, she slept, and  
thro' her dream

A ghostly murmur floated, 'Come to me,  
Cenone! I can wrong thee now no more,  
Cenone, my Cenone,' and the dream

Wail'd in her, when she woke beneath  
the stars.

What star could burn so low? not Iliion  
yet.

What light was there? She rose and  
slowly down,

By the long torrent's ever-deepen'd roar,

Paced, following, as in trance, the silent cry.  
 She waked a bird of prey that scream'd and past;  
 She roused a snake that hissing writhed away;  
 A panther sprang across her path, she heard  
 The shriek of some lost life among the pines,  
 But when she gain'd the broader vale, and saw  
 The ring of faces redden'd by the flames  
 Enfolding that dark body which had lain  
 Of old in her embrace, paused—and then ask'd  
 Falteringly, 'Who lies on yonder pyre?'  
 But every man was mute for reverence.  
 Then moving quickly forward till the heat  
 Smote on her brow, she lifted up a voice  
 Of shrill command, 'Who burns upon the pyre?'  
 Whereon their oldest and their boldest said,  
 'He, whom thou wouldst not heal!' and all at once  
 The morning light of happy marriage broke  
 Thro' all the clouded years of widowhood,  
 And muffling up her comely head, and crying  
 'Husband!' she leapt upon the funeral pile,  
 And mixt herself with *him* and past in fire.

## ST. TELEMACHUS.\*

HAD the fierce ashes of some fiery peak  
 Been hurl'd so high they ranged about the globe?  
 For day by day, thro' many a blood-red eve,  
 In that four-hundredth summer after Christ,  
 The wrathful sunset glared against a cross  
 Rear'd on the tumbled ruins of an old fane  
 No longer sacred to the Sun, and flamed  
 On one huge slope beyond, where in his cave  
 The man, whose pious hand had built the cross,

A man who never changed a word with men,  
 Fasted and pray'd, Telemachus the Saint.  
 Eve after eve that haggard anchorite  
 Would haunt the desolated fane, and there  
 Gaze at the ruin, often mutter low  
 'Vicisti Galilæe'; louder again,  
 Spurning a shatter'd fragment of the God,  
 'Vicisti Galilæe!' but—when now  
 Bathed in that lurid crimson—ask'd 'Is earth  
 On fire to the West? or is the Demon-god  
 Wroth at his fall?' and heard an answer  
 'Wake  
 Thou deedless dreamer, lazying out a life  
 Of self-suppression, not of selfless love.'  
 And once a flight of shadowy fighters  
 cross  
 The disk, and once, he thought, a shape  
 with wings  
 Came sweeping by him, and pointed to  
 the West,  
 And at his ear he heard a whisper  
 'Rome'  
 And in his heart he cried 'The call of  
 God!'  
 And call'd arose, and, slowly plunging  
 down  
 Thro' that disastrous glory, set his face  
 By waste and field and town of alien  
 tongue,  
 Following a hundred sunsets, and the  
 sphere  
 Of westward-wheeling stars; and every  
 dawn  
 Struck from him his own shadow on to  
 Rome.  
 Foot-sore, way-worn, at length he  
 touch'd his goal,  
 The Christian city. All her splendour  
 fail'd  
 To lure those eyes that only yearn'd to  
 see,  
 Fleeting betwixt her column'd palace-  
 walls,  
 The shape with wings. Anon there past  
 a crowd  
 With shameless laughter, Pagan oath,  
 and jest,  
 Heard Romans brawling of their monstrous  
 games;  
 He, all but deaf thro' age and weariness,

And muttering to himself 'The call of  
God'  
And borne along by that full stream of  
men,  
Like some old wreck on some indrawing  
sea,  
Gain'd their huge Colosseum. The caged  
beast  
Yell'd, as he yell'd of yore for Christian  
blood.  
Three slaves were trailing a dead lion  
away,  
One, a dead man. He stumbled in, and  
sat  
Blinded; but when the momentary gloom,  
Made by the noonday blaze without, had  
left  
His aged eyes, he raised them, and beheld  
A blood-red awning waver overhead,  
The dust send up a steam of human  
blood,  
The gladiators moving toward their fight,  
And eighty thousand Christian faces  
watch  
Man murder man. A sudden strength  
from heaven,  
As some great shock may wake a palsied  
limb,  
Turn'd him again to boy, for up he sprang,  
And glided lightly down the stairs, and  
o'er  
The barrier that divided beast from man  
Slipt, and ran on, and flung himself be-  
tween  
The gladiatorial swords, and call'd 'For-  
bear  
In the great name of Him who died for  
men,  
Christ Jesus!' For one moment after-  
ward  
A silence follow'd as of death, and then  
A hiss as from a wilderness of snakes,  
Then one deep roar as of a breaking  
sea,  
And then a shower of stones that stoned  
him dead,  
And then once more a silence as of  
death.  
His dream became a deed that woke  
the world,  
For while the frantic rabble in half-amaze  
Stared at him dead, thro' all the nobler  
hearts

In that vast Oval ran a shudder of shame.  
The Baths, the Forum gabbled of his  
death,  
And preachers linger'd o'er his dying  
words,  
Which would not die, but echo'd on to  
reach  
Honorius, till he heard them, and decreed  
That Rome no more should wallow in this  
old lust  
Of Paganism, and make her festal hour  
Dark with the blood of man who mur-  
der'd man.

(For Honorius, who succeeded to the sov-  
ereignty over Europe, suppress the gladiatorial  
combats practised of old in Rome, on occasion of  
the following event. There was one Telemachus,  
embracing the ascetic mode of life, who setting  
out from the East and arriving at Rome for this  
very purpose, while that accursed spectacle was  
being performed, entered himself the circus, and  
descending into the arena, attempted to hold back  
those who wielded deadly weapons against each  
other. The spectators of the murderous fray,  
possesst with the drunken glee of the demon who  
delights in such bloodshed, stoned to death the  
preacher of peace. The admirable Emperor  
learning this put a stop to that evil exhibition.  
—Theodore's *Ecclesiastical History*.)

### AKBAR'S DREAM.\*

AN INSCRIPTION BY ABUL FAZL FOR A TEMPLE  
IN KASHMIR (Blochmann xxxii.).

O GOD in every temple I see people that see  
thee, and in every language I hear spoken, peo-  
ple praise thee.

Polytheism and Islám feel after thee.

Each religion says, 'Thou art one, without  
equal.'

If it be a mosque people murmur the holy  
prayer, and if it be a Christian Church, people  
ring the bell from love to Thee.

Sometimes I frequent the Christian cloister,  
and sometimes the mosque.

But it is thou whom I search from temple to  
temple.

Thy elect have no dealings with either heresy  
or orthodoxy; for neither of them stands behind  
the screen of thy truth.

Heresy to the heretic, and religion to the  
orthodox,

But the dust of the rose-petal belongs to the  
heart of the perfume seller.

\* Copyright, 1892, by Macmillan & Co.

AKBAR and ABUL FAZL before the palace  
at Futehpur-Sikri at night.

'LIGHT of the nations' ask'd his Chron-  
icler  
Of Akbar 'what has darken'd thee to-  
night?'

Then, after one quick glance upon the  
stars,

And turning slowly toward him, Akbar  
said

'The shadow of a dream—an idle one  
It may be. Still I raised my heart to  
heaven,

I pray'd against the dream. To pray, to  
do—

To pray, to do according to the prayer,  
Are, both, to worship Alla, but the prayers,  
That have no successor in deed, are faint  
And pale in Alla's eyes, fair mothers they  
Dying in childbirth of dead sons. I vow'd  
Whate'er my dreams, I still would do the  
right

Thro' all the vast dominion which a  
sword,

That only conquers men to conquer peace,  
Has won me. Alla be my guide!

But come,  
My noble friend, my faithful counsellor,  
Sit by my side. While thou art one with  
me,

I seem no longer like a lonely man  
In the king's garden, gathering here and  
there

From each fair plant the blossom choic-  
est-grown

To wreathe a crown not only for the king  
But in due time for every Mussulmân,  
Brahmin, and Buddhist, Christian, and  
Parsee,

Thro' all the warring world of Hindustan.  
Well spake thy brother in his hymn to  
heaven

"Thy glory baffles wisdom. All the tracks  
Of science making toward Thy Perfect-  
ness

Are blinding desert sand; we scarce can  
spell

The Alif of Thine Alphabet of Love."

He knows Himself, men nor them-  
selves nor Him,

For every splinter'd fraction of a sect  
Will clamour "I am on the Perfect Way,

All else is to perdition."

Shall the rose  
Cry to the lotus "No flower thou"? the  
palm

Call to the cypress "I alone am fair"?  
The mango spurn the melon at his foot?  
"Mine is the one fruit Alla made for  
man."

Look how the living pulse of Alla heats  
Thro' all His world. If every single star  
Should shriek its claim "I only am in  
heaven"

Why that were such sphere-music as the  
Greek

Had hardly dream'd of. There is light  
in all,

And light, with more or less of shade, in  
all

Man-modes of worship; but our Ulama,  
Who "sitting on green sofas contemplate  
The torment of the damn'd" already,  
these

Are like wild brutes new-caged—the  
narrower

The cage, the more their fury. Me they  
front

With sullen brows. What wonder! I  
decreed

That even the dog was clean, that men  
may taste

Swine-flesh, drink wine; they know too  
that whene'er

In our free Hall, where each philosophy  
And mood of faith may hold its own,  
they blurt

Their furious formalisms, I but hear  
The clash of tides that meet in narrow  
seas,—

Not the Great Voice not the true Deep.  
To drive

A people from their ancient fold of Faith,  
And wall them up perforce in mine—  
unwise,

Unkinglike;—and the morning of my  
reign

Was redder'd by that cloud of shame  
when I . . .

I hate the rancour of their castes and  
creeds,

I let men worship as they will, I reap  
No revenue from the field of unbelief.

I cull from every faith and race the best  
And bravest soul for counsellor and friend.

I loathe the very name of infidel.  
I stagger at the Korân and the sword.  
I shudder at the Christian and the stake;  
Yet "Alla," says their sacred book, "is  
Love,"

And when the Goan Padre quoting Him,  
Issa Ben Mariam, his own prophet, cried  
"Love one another little ones" and  
"bless"

Whom? even "your persecutors"! there  
methought

The cloud was rifted by a purer gleam  
Than glances from the sun of our Islâm.

And thou rememberest what a fury  
shook

Those pillars of a moulder'd faith, when  
he,

That other, prophet of their fall, pro-  
claimed

His Master as "the Sun of Righteous-  
ness,"

Yea, Alla here on earth, who caught and  
held

His people by the bridle-rein of Truth.

What art thou saying? "And was not  
Alla call'd

In old Irân the Sun of Love? and Love  
The net of truth?"

A voice from old Irân!

Nay, but I know it—*his*, the hoary  
Sheik,

On whom the women shrieking "Atheist"  
flung

Filth from the roof, the mystic melodist  
Who all but lost himself in Alla, him

Abû Satd—

—a sun but dimly seen

Here, till the mortal morning mists of  
earth

Fade in the noon of heaven, when creed  
and race

Shall bear false witness, each of each, no  
more,

But find their limits by that larger light,  
And overstep them, moving easily

Thro' after-ages in the love of Truth,  
The truth of Love.

The sun, the sun! they rail

At me the Zoroastrian. Let the Sun,  
Who heats our earth to yield us grain  
and fruit,

And laughs upon thy field as well as  
mine,

And warms the blood of Shiah and  
Sunnee,

Symbol the Eternal! Yea and may not  
kings

Express Him also by their warmth of  
love

For all they rule—by equal law for all?

By deeds a light to men?

But no such light

Glanced from our Presence on the face  
of one,

Who breaking in upon us yestermorn,  
With all the Hells a-glare in either eye,  
Yell'd "hast *thou* brought us down a new  
Korân

From heaven? art *thou* the Prophet?  
canst *thou* work

Miracles?" and the wild horse, anger,  
plunged

To fling me, and fail'd. Miracles! no,  
not I

Nor he, nor any. I can but lift the torch  
Of Reason in the dusky cave of Life,

And gaze on this great miracle, the  
World,

Adoring That who made, and makes,  
and is,

And is not, what I gaze on—all else Form,  
Ritual, varying with the tribes of men.

Ay but, my friend, thou knowest I hold  
that forms

Are needful: only let the hand that  
rules,

With politic care, with utter gentleness,  
Mould them for all his people.

And what are forms?

Fair garments, plain or rich, and fitting  
close

Or flying looselier, warm'd but by the  
heart

Within them, moved but by the living  
limb,

And cast aside, when old, for newer,—  
Forms!

The Spiritual in Nature's market-place—  
The silent Alphabet-of-heaven-in-man

Made vocal—banners blazoning a Power  
That is not seen and rules from far away—

A silken cord let down from Paradise,  
When fine Philosophies would fail, to  
draw

The crowd from wallowing in the mire  
of earth,



And all the more, when these behold  
their Lord,  
Who shaped the forms, obey them, and  
himself

Here on this bank in *some* way live the life  
Beyond the bridge, and serve that Infinite  
Within us, as without, that All-in-all,  
And over all, the never-changing One  
And ever-changing Many, in praise of  
Whom

The Christian bell, the cry from off the  
mosque,

And vaguer voices of Polytheism  
Make but one music, harmonising, "Pray."

There westward—under yon slow-fall-  
ing star,

The Christians own a Spiritual Head;  
And following thy true counsel, by thine  
aid,

Myself am such in our Islâm, for no  
Mirage of glory, but for power to fuse  
My myriads into union under one;  
To hunt the tiger of oppression out  
From office; and to spread the Divine  
Faith

Like calming oil on all their stormy  
creeds,

And fill the hollows between wave and  
wave;

To nurse my children on the milk of  
Truth,

And alchemise old hates into the gold  
Of Love, and make it current; and beat  
back

The menacing poison of intolerant priests,  
Those cobras ever setting up their hoods—  
One Alla! one Kalifa!

Still—at times  
A doubt, a fear,—and yester afternoon  
I dream'd,—thou knowest how deep a  
well of love

My heart is for my son, Saleem, mine  
heir,—

And yet so wild and wayward that my  
dream—

He glares askance at thee as one of those  
Who mix the wines of heresy in the cup  
Of counsel—so—I pray thee—

Well, I dream'd  
That stone by stone I rear'd a sacred  
fane,

A temple, neither Pagod, Mosque, nor  
Church,

But loftier, simpler, always open-door'd  
To every breath from heaven, and Truth  
and Peace

And Love and Justice came and dwelt  
therein;

But while we stood rejoicing, I and thou,  
I heard a mocking laugh "the new  
Korân!"

And on the sudden, and with a cry  
"Saleem"

Thou, thou—I saw thee fall before me,  
and then

Me too the black-wing'd Azrael overcame,  
But Death had ears and eyes; I watch'd  
my son,

And those that follow'd, loosen, stone  
from stone,

All my fair work; and from the ruin  
arose

The shriek and curse of trampled mil-  
lions, even

As in the time before; but while I  
groan'd,

From out the sunset pour'd an alien  
race,

Who fitted stone to stone again, and  
Truth,

Peace, Love and Justice came and dwelt  
therein,

Nor in the field without were seen or  
heard

Fires of Sûttee, nor wail of baby-wife,  
Or Indian widow; and in sleep I said  
"All praise to Alla by whatever hands  
My mission be accomplish'd!" but we  
hear

Music: our palace is awake, and morn  
Has lifted the dark eyelash of the Night  
From off the rosy cheek of waking Day.  
Our hymn to the sun. They sing it. Let  
us go.'

## HYMN.

## I.

Once again thou flamed heavenward, once again  
we see thee rise.

Every morning is thy birthday gladdening human  
hearts and eyes.

Every morning here we greet it, bowing  
lowly down before thee,

Thee the Godlike, thee the changeless in thine  
ever-changing skies.

## II.

Shadow-maker, shadow-slayer, arrowing light  
from clime to clime,

Hear thy myriad laureates hail thee monarch in  
their woodland rhyme.

Warble bird, and open flower, and, men,  
below the dome of azure

Kneel adoring Him the Timeless in the flame  
that measures Time!

## NOTES TO AKBAR'S DREAM.

The great Mogul Emperor Akbar was born October 14, 1542, and died 1605. At 13 he succeeded his father Humayun; at 18 he himself assumed the sole charge of government. He subdued and ruled over fifteen large provinces; his empire included all India north of the Vindhya Mountains—in the south of India he was not so successful. His tolerance of religions and his abhorrence of religious persecution put our Tudors to shame. He invented a new eclectic religion by which he hoped to unite all creeds, castes and peoples; and his legislation was remarkable for vigour, justice and humanity.

'*Thy glory baffles wisdom.*' The Emperor quotes from a hymn to the Deity by Faizi, brother of Abul Fazl, Akbar's chief friend and minister, who wrote the *Ain i Akbari* (Annals of Akbar). His influence on his age was immense. It may be that he and his brother Faizi led Akbar's mind away from Islâm and the Prophet—this charge is brought against him by every Muhammadan writer; but Abul Fazl also led his sovereign to a true appreciation of his duties, and from the moment that he entered Court, the problem of successfully ruling over mixed races, which Islâm in few other countries had to solve, was carefully considered, and the policy of toleration was the result (Blochmann xxix.).

*Abul Fazl* thus gives an account of himself 'The advice of my Father with difficulty kept me back from acts of folly; my mind had no rest and my heart felt itself drawn to the sages of Mongolia or to the hermits on Lebanon. I longed for interviews with the Llamás of Tibet or with the padres of Portugal, and I would gladly sit with the priests of the Parsis and the learned of the Zendavesta. I was sick of the learned of my own land.'

He became the intimate friend and adviser of Akbar, and helped him in his tolerant system of government. Professor Blochmann writes 'Impressed with a favourable idea of the value of his Hindu subjects, he (Akbar) had resolved when pensively sitting in the evenings on the solitary stone at Futehpur-Sikri to rule with an even hand

all men in his dominions; but as the extreme views of the learned and the lawyers continually urged him to persecute instead of to heal, he instituted discussions, because, believing himself to be in error, he thought it his duty as ruler to inquire.' 'These discussions took place every Thursday night in the Ibadat-khana a building at Futehpur-Sikri, erected for the purpose' (Malleson).

In these discussions Abul Fazl became a great power, and he induced the chief of the disputants to draw up a document defining the 'divine Faith' as it was called, and assigning to Akbar the rank of a Mujahid, or supreme khalifah, the vicegerent of the one true God.

Abul Fazl was finally murdered at the instigation of Akbar's son Salim, who in his Memoirs declares that it was Abul Fazl who had perverted his father's mind so that he denied the divine mission of Mahomet, and turned away his love from his son.

*Faizi.* When Akbar conquered the North-West Provinces of India, Faizi, then 20, began his life as a poet, and earned his living as a physician. He is reported to have been very generous and to have treated the poor for nothing. His fame reached Akbar's ears who commanded him to come to the camp at Chitor. Akbar was delighted with his varied knowledge and scholarship and made the poet teacher to his sons. Faizi at 33 was appointed Chief Poet (1588). He collected a fine library of 4300 MSS. and died at the age of 40 (1595) when Akbar incorporated his collection of rare books in the Imperial Library.

*The Warring World of Hindostan.* Akbar's rapid conquests and the good government of his fifteen provinces with their complete military, civil and political systems make him conspicuous among the great kings of history.

*The Goan Padre.* Abul Fazl relates that 'one night the Ibadat-khana was brightened by the presence of Padre Rodolpho, who for intelligence and wisdom was unrivalled among Christian doctors. Several carping and bigoted men attacked him and this afforded an opportunity for the display of the calm judgment and justice of the assembly. These men brought forward the old received assertions, and did not attempt to arrive at truth by reasoning. Their statements were torn to pieces, and they were nearly put to shame, when they began to attack the contradictions of the Gospel, but they could not prove their assertions. With perfect calmness, and earnest conviction of the truth he replied to their arguments.'

*Abû Sa'îd.* 'Love is the net of Truth, Love

is the noose of God' is a quotation from the great Sufee poet Abû Sa'id—born A.D. 968, died at the age of 83. He is a mystical poet, and some of his expressions have been compared to our George Herbert. Of Shaikh Abû Sa'id it is recorded that he said, 'when my affairs had reacht a certain pitch I buried under the dust my books and opened a shop on my own account (*i.e.* began to teach with authority), and verily men represented me as that which I was not, until it came to this, that they went to the Qadhî and testified against me of unbeliefhood; and women got upon the roofs and cast unclean things upon me.' (*Vide* reprint from article in *National Review*, March, 1891, by C. J. Pickering.)

*Aziz.* I am not aware that there is any record of such intrusion upon the king's privacy, but the expressions in the text occur in a letter sent by Akbar's foster-brother Aziz, who refused to come to court when summoned and threw up his government, and 'after writing an insolent and reproachful letter to Akbar in which he asked him if he had received a book from heaven, or if he could work miracles like Mahomet that he presumed to introduce a new religion, warned him that he was on the way to eternal perdition, and concluded with a prayer to God to bring him back into the path of salvation' (Elphinstone).

'The Koran, the Old and New Testament, and the Psalms of David are called *books* by way of excellence, and their followers "People of the Book"' (Elphinstone).

*Akbar* according to Abdel Kadir had his son Murad instructed in the Gospel, and used to make him begin his lessons 'In the name of Christ' instead of in the usual way 'In the name of God.'

*To drive*

*A people from the irancient fold of Truth, etc.* Malleston says 'This must have happened because Akbar states it, but of the forced conversions I have found no record. This must have taken place whilst he was still a minor, and whilst the chief authority was wielded by Bairam.'

*'I reap no revenue from the field of unbelief.'*

The Hindus are fond of pilgrimages, and Akbar removed a remunerative tax raised by his predecessors on pilgrimages. He also abolished the *fezza* or capitation tax on those who differed from the Mahomedan faith. He discouraged all *excessive* prayers, fasts and pilgrimages.

*Sati.* Akbar decreed that every widow who showed the least desire not to be burnt on her husband's funeral pyre, should be let go free and unharmed.

*Baby-wife.* He forbad marriage before the age of puberty.

*Indian widow.* Akbar ordained that remarriage was lawful.

*Music.* 'About a watch before daybreak,' says Abul Fazl, the musicians played to the king in the palace. 'His Majesty had such a knowledge of the science of music as trained musicians do not possess.'

'*The Divine Faith.*' The Divine Faith slowly passed away under the immediate successors of Akbar. An idea of what the Divine Faith was may be gathered from the inscription at the head of the poem. The document referred to, Abul Fazl says 'brought about excellent results (1) the Court became a gathering place of the sages and learned of all creeds; the good doctrines of all religious systems were recognized, and their defects were not allowed to obscure their good features; (2) perfect toleration or peace with all was established; and (3) the perverse and evil-minded were covered with shame on seeing the disinterested motives of His Majesty, and these stood in the pillory of disgrace.' Dated September 1579—Ragab 987 (Blochmann xiv.).

## THE BANDIT'S DEATH.\*

TO SIR WALTER SCOTT.<sup>1</sup>

O GREAT AND GALLANT SCOTT,  
TRUE GENTLEMAN HEART, BLOOD AND BONE,  
I WOULD IT HAD BEEN MY LOT  
TO HAVE SEEN THEE, AND HEARD THEE, AND  
KNOWN.

SIR, do you see this dagger? nay, why do  
you start aside?

I was not going to stab you, tho' I *am* the  
Bandit's bride.

You have set a price on his head: I may  
claim it without a lie.

What have I here in the cloth? I will  
show it you by-and-by.

Sir, I was once a wife. I had one brief  
summer of bliss

But the Bandit had woo'd me in vain, and  
he stabb'd my Piero with this.

<sup>1</sup> I have adopted Sir Walter Scott's version of the following story as given in his last journal (Death of Il Bizarro)—but I have taken the liberty of making some slight alterations.

And he dragg'd me up there to his cave  
in the mountain, and there one  
day

He had left his dagger behind him. I  
found it. I hid it away.

For he reek'd with the blood of Piero;  
his kisses were red with his crime,  
And I cried to the Saints to avenge me.  
They heard, they bided their time.

In a while I bore him a son, and he loved  
to dandle the child,  
And that was a link between us; but I—  
to be reconciled?—

No, by the Mother of God, tho' I think I  
hated him less,  
And—well, if I sinn'd last night, I will  
find the Priest and confess.

Listen! we three were alone in the dell  
at the close of the day.  
I was liltin' a song to the babe, and it  
laugh'd like a dawn in May.

Then on a sudden we saw your soldiers  
crossing the ridge,  
And he caught my little one from me:  
we dipt down under the bridge

By the great dead pine—you know it—  
and heard, as we crouch'd below,  
The clatter of arms, and voices, and men  
passing to and fro.

Black was the night when we crept away  
—not a star in the sky—  
Hush'd as the heart of the grave, till the  
little one utter'd a cry.

I whisper'd 'give it to me,' but he would  
not answer me—then  
He gript it so hard by the throat that the  
boy never cried again.

We return'd to his cave—the link was  
broken—he sobb'd and he wept,  
And curs'd himself; then he yawn'd, for  
the wretch *could* sleep, and he slept

Ay, till dawn stole into the cave, and a  
ray red as blood  
Glanced on the strangled face—I could  
make Sleep Death, if I would—

Glared on at the murder'd son, and the  
murderous father at rest, . . .  
I drove the blade that had slain my hus-  
band thrice thro' his breast.

He was loved at least by his dog: it was  
chain'd, but its horrible yell  
'She has kill'd him, has kill'd him, has  
kill'd him' rang out all down thro'  
the dell,

Till I felt I could end myself too with the  
dagger—so deafen'd and dazed—  
Take it, and save me from it! I fled. I  
was all but crazed

With the grief that gnaw'd at my heart,  
and the weight that dragg'd at my  
hand;  
But thanks to the Blessed Saints that I  
came on none of his band;

And the band will be scatter'd now their  
gallant captain is dead,  
For I with this dagger of his—do you  
doubt me? Here is his head!

## THE CHURCH-WARDEN AND THE CURATE.

This is written in the dialect which was current  
in my youth at Spilsby and in the country about it.

### I.

EH? good daäy! good daäy! thaw it  
bean't not mooch of a daäy,  
Nasty, casselty weather! an' mea haäfe  
down wi' my haäy!

### II.

How be the farm gittin on? noäways.  
Gittin on i'deeäd!  
Why, tonups was haäfe on 'em fingers  
an' toäs, an' the mare brokken-  
kneeäd,  
An' pigs didn't sell at fall, an' wa lost  
wer Haldeny cow,  
An' it beäts ma to knaw wot she died on,  
but wool's looking oop ony how.

## III.

An' soä they've maäde tha a parson, an'  
 thou'll git along, niver fear,  
 Fur I beän chuch-warden mysen i' the  
 parish fur fifteen year.  
 Well—sin ther beä chuch-wardens, ther  
 mun be parsons an' all,  
 An' if t'one stick alongside t'uther the  
 chuch weänt happen a fall.

## IV.

Fur I wur a Baptis wonst, an' ageän the  
 toithe an' the raäte,  
 Till I fun that it warn't not the gaäinist  
 waäy to the narra Gaäte.  
 An' I can't abeär 'em, I can't, fur a lot  
 on 'em coom'd ta-year—  
 I wur down wi' the rheumatis then—to  
*my* pond to wesh thessens there—  
 Sa I sticks like the ivin as long as I lives  
 to the owd chuch now,  
 Fur they wesh'd their sins i' *my* pond,  
 an' I doubts they poison'd the cow.

## V.

Ay, an' ya seed the Bishop. They says  
 'at he coom'd fra nowt—  
 Burn i' traäde. Sa I warrants 'e niver  
 said haäfe wot 'e thowt,  
 But 'e creeäpt an' 'e crawl'd along, till 'e  
 feeäld 'e could howd 'is oän,  
 Then 'e married a greät Yerl's darter, an'  
 sits o' the Bishop's throän.

## VI.

Now I'll gie tha a bit o' my mind an' tha  
 want be taäkin' offence,  
 Fur thou be a big scholard now wi' a  
 hoonderd haäcre o' sense—  
 But sich an obstropulous lad—naäy, naäy  
 —fur I minds tha sa well,  
 Tha'd niver not hopple thy tongue, an'  
 the tongue's sit afire o' Hell,  
 As I says to my missis to-daäy, when she  
 hurl'd a plaäte at the cat  
 An' anoother ageän my noäse. Ya was  
 niver sa bad as that.

## VII.

But I minds when i' Howlahy beck won  
 daäy ya was ticklin' o' trout,

An' keeäper 'e seed ya an roon'd, an' 'e  
 beal'd to ya 'Lad coom hout'  
 An' ya stood oop maäkt i' the beck, an'  
 ya tell'd 'im to knaw his awn plaäce  
 An' ya call'd 'im a clown, ya did, an' ya  
 thraw'd the fish i' 'is faäce,  
 An' 'e torn'd as red as a stag-tuckey's  
 wattles, but theer an' then  
 I coämb'd 'im down, fur I promised ya'd  
 niver not do it ageän.

## VIII.

An' I cotch'd tha wonst i' my garden,  
 when thou was a height-year-howd,  
 An' I fun thy pockets as full o' my pippins  
 as iver they'd 'owd,  
 An' thou was as peärky as owt, an' tha  
 maäde me as mad as mad,  
 But I says to tha 'keeäp 'em, an' welcome'  
 fur thou was the parson's lad.

## IX.

An' Parson 'e 'ears on it all, an' then  
 taäkes kindly to me,  
 An' then I wur chose Chuch-warden an'  
 coom'd to the top o' the tree,  
 Fur Quoloty's hall my friends, an' they  
 maäkes ma a help to the poor,  
 When I gits the plaäte fuller o' Soondays  
 nor ony chuch-warden afoor,  
 Fur if iver thy feyther 'ed riled me I kep'  
 mysen meeäk as a lamb,  
 An' saw by the Graäce o' the Lord, Mr.  
 Harry, I ham wot I ham.

## X.

But Parson 'e *will* speäk out, saw, now 'e  
 be sixty-seven,  
 He'll niver swap Owlby an' Scratby fur  
 owt but the Kingdom o' Heaven;  
 An' thou'll be 'is Curate 'ere, but, if iver  
 tha meäns to git 'igher,  
 Tha mun tackle the sins o' the Wo'ld, an'  
 not the faults o' the Squire.  
 An' I reckons tha'll light of a livin' some-  
 wheers i' the Wowd or the Fen,  
 If tha cottons down to thy betters, an'  
 keeäps thysen to thysen.  
 But niver not speäk plaäin out, if tha  
 wants to git forrards a bit,  
 But creeäp along the hedge-bottoms, an'  
 thou'll be a Bishop yit.



## XI.

Naäy, but tha *mun* speäk hout to the  
Baptises here i' the town,  
Fur moäst on 'em talks ageän tithe,  
an' I'd like tha to preäch 'em down,  
Fur *they've* been a-preächin' *mea* down,  
they heve, an' I haätes 'em now,  
Fur they læved their nasty sins i' *my*  
pond, an' it poison'd the cow.

## GLOSSARY.

' Casselty,' casualty, chance weather.  
' Haäfe down wi' my haäy,' while my grass is  
only half-mown.  
' Fingers an' toäs,' a disease in turnips.  
' Fall,' autumn.  
' If t'one stick alongside t'uther,' if the one  
hold by the other. One is pronounced like  
'own.'  
' Fun,' found.  
' Gaäinist,' nearest.  
' Ta-year,' this year.  
' Ivin,' ivy.  
' Obstropulous,' obstreperous—here the Curate  
makes a sign of deprecation.  
' Hopple' or 'hobble,' to tie the legs of a skit-  
tish cow when she is being milked.  
' Beal'd,' bellowed.  
In such words as 'torned,' 'turned,' 'hurled,'  
the *r* is hardly audible.  
' Stag-tuckey,' turkey-cock.  
' Height-year-howd,' eight-year-old.  
' 'Owd,' hold.  
' Peärky,' pert.  
' Wo'ld,' the world. Short *o*.  
' Wowd,' wold.

## CHARITY.\*

## I.

WHAT am I doing, you say to me, 'wast-  
ing the sweet summer hours'?  
Haven't you eyes? I am dressing the  
grave of a woman with flowers.

## II.

For a woman ruin'd the world, as God's  
own scriptures tell,  
And a man ruin'd mine, but a woman,  
God bless her, kept me from Hell.

## III.

Love me? O yes, no doubt—how long—  
till you threw me aside!  
Dresses and laces and jewels and never a  
ring for the bride.

## IV.

All very well just now to be calling me  
darling and sweet,  
And after a while would it matter so  
much if I came on the street?

## V.

You when I met you first—when *he*  
brought you!—I turn'd away  
And the hard blue eyes have it still, that  
stare of a beast of prey.

## VI.

You were his friend—you—you—when he  
promised to make me his bride,  
And you knew that he meant to betray  
me—you knew—you knew that he  
lied.

## VII.

He married an heiress, an orphan with  
half a shire of estate,—  
I sent him a desolate wail and a curse,  
when I learn'd my fate.

## VIII.

For I used to play with the knife, creep  
down to the river-shore,  
Moan to myself 'one plunge—then quiet  
for evermore.'

## IX.

Would the man have a touch of remorse  
when he heard what an end was  
mine?  
Or brag to his fellow rakes of his conquest  
over their wine?

## X.

Money—my hire—*his* money—I sent him  
back what he gave,—



Will you move a little that way? your  
shadow falls on the grave.

## XI.

Two trains clash'd: then and there he  
was crush'd in a moment and died,  
But the new-wedded wife was unharm'd,  
tho' sitting close at his side.

## XII.

She found my letter upon him, my wail  
of reproach and scorn;  
I had cursed the woman he married, and  
him, and the day I was born.

## XIII.

They put him aside for ever, and after a  
week—no more—  
A stranger as welcome as Satan—a widow  
came to my door:

## XIV.

So I turn'd my face to the wall, I was  
mad, I was raving-wild,  
I was close on that hour of dishonour, the  
birth of a baseborn child.

## XV.

O you that can flatter your victims, and  
juggle, and lie and cajole,  
Man, can you even guess at the love of a  
soul for a soul?

## XVI.

I had cursed her as woman and wife, and  
in wife and woman I found  
The tenderest Christ-like creature that  
ever stepped on the ground.

## XVII.

She watch'd me, she nursed me, she fed  
me, she sat day and night by my  
bed,  
Till the joyless birthday came of a boy  
born happily dead.

## XVIII.

And her name? what was it? I ask'd  
her. She said with a sudden glow  
On her patient face 'My dear, I will tell  
you before I go.'

## XIX.

And I when I learnt it at last, I shriek'd,  
I sprang from my seat,  
I wept, and I kiss'd her hands, I flung  
myself down at her feet,

## XX.

And we pray'd together for *him*, for *him*  
who had given her the name.  
She has left me enough to live on. I  
need no wages of shame.

## XXI.

She died of a fever caught when a nurse  
in a hospital ward.  
She is high in the Heaven of Heavens,  
she is face to face with her Lord,

## XXII.

And He sees not her like anywhere in  
this pitiless world of ours!  
I have told you my tale. Get you gone.  
I am dressing her grave with flow-  
ers.

## KAPIOLANI.

Kapiolani was a great chieftainess who lived  
in the Sandwich Islands at the beginning of this  
century. She won the cause of Christianity by  
openly defying the priests of the terrible goddess  
Peele. In spite of their threats of vengeance she  
ascended the volcano Manna-Loa, then clambered  
down over a bank of cinders 400 feet high to the  
great lake of fire (nine miles round)—Kilauea—  
the home and haunt of the goddess, and flung into  
the boiling lava the consecrated berries which it  
was sacrilege for a woman to handle.

## I.

WHEN from the terrors of Nature a peo-  
ple have fashiou'd and worship a  
Spirit of Evil,

Blest be the Voice of the Teacher who  
calls to them  
'Set yourselves free!'

## II.

Noble the Saxon who hurl'd at his Idol  
a valorous weapon in olden Eng-  
land!

Great and greater, and greatest of women,  
island heroine, Kapiolani

Clomb the mountain, and flung the berries,  
and dared the Goddess, and freed  
the people

Of Hawa-i-ee!

## III.

A people believing that Peelè the Goddess  
would wallow in fiery riot and revel  
On Kilauēā,

Dance in a fountain of flame with her  
devils, or shake with her thunders  
and shatter her island,

Rolling her anger

Thro' blasted valley and flaring forest in  
blood-red cataracts down to the  
sea!

## IV.

Long as the lava-light  
Glares from the lava-lake

Dazing the starlight,

Long as the silvery vapour in daylight  
Over the mountain

Floats, will the glory of Kapiolani be ming-  
led with either on Hawa-i-ee.

## V.

What said her Priesthood?

'Woe to this island if ever a woman  
should handle or gather the berries  
of Peelè!

Accurséd were she!

And woe to this island if ever a woman  
should climb to the dwelling of  
Peelè the Goddess!

Accurséd were she!'

## VI.

One from the Sunrise  
Dawn'd on His people, and slowly before  
him

Vanish'd shadow-like  
Gods and Goddesses,  
None but the terrible Peelè remaining as  
Kapiolani ascended her mountain,  
Baffled her priesthood,  
Broke the Taboo,  
Dipt to the crater,  
Call'd on the Power adored by the Chris-  
tian, and crying 'I dare her, let  
Peelè avenge herself!'  
Into the flame-billow dash'd the berries,  
and drove the demon from Ha-  
wa-i-ee.

## THE DAWN.

"You are but children."

*Egyptian Priest to Solon.*

## I.

RED of the Dawn!

Screams of a babe in the red-hot palms  
of a Moloch of Tyre,

Man with his brotherless dinner on  
man in the tropical wood,

Priests in the name of the Lord passing  
souls thro' fire to the fire,

Head-hunters and boats of Dahomey that  
float upon human blood!

## II.

Red of the Dawn!

Godless fury of peoples, and Christless  
frolic of kings,

And the bolt of war dashing down upon  
cities and blazing farms,

For Babylon was a child new-born, and  
Rome was a babe in arms,

And London and Paris and all the rest  
are as yet but in leading-strings.

## III.

Dawn not Day,

While scandal is mouthing a bloodless  
name at *her* cannibal feast,

And rake-ruin'd bodies and souls go  
down in a common wreck,

And the Press of a thousand cities is  
prized for it smells of the beast,

Or easily violates virgin Truth for a coin  
or a cheque.

## IV.

Dawn not Day!

Is it Shame, so few should have climb'd  
 from the dens in the level below,  
 Men, with a heart and a soul, no slaves  
 of a four-footed will?  
 But if twenty million of summers are  
 stored in the sunlight still,  
 We are far from the noon of man, there  
 is time for the race to grow.

## V.

Red of the Dawn!

Is it turning a fainter red? so be it, but  
 when shall we lay  
 The Ghost of the Brute that is walking  
 and haunting us yet, and be free?  
 In a hundred, a thousand winters? Ah,  
 what will *our* children be,  
 The men of a hundred thousand, a million  
 summers away?

## THE MAKING OF MAN.

WHERE is one that, born of woman, alto-  
 gether can escape  
 From the lower world within him, moods  
 of tiger, or of ape?  
 Man as yet is being made, and ere the  
 crowning Age of ages,  
 Shall not æon after æon pass and touch  
 him into shape?  
 All about him shadow still, but, while  
 the races flower and fade,  
 Prophet-eyes may catch a glory slowly  
 gaining on the shade,  
 Till the peoples all are one, and all  
 their voices blend in choric  
 Hallelujah to the Maker 'It is finish'd.  
 Man is made.'

## THE DREAMER.

ON a midnight in midwinter when all but  
 the winds were dead,  
 'The meek shall inherit the earth' was a  
 Scripture that rang thro' his head,  
 Till he dream'd that a Voice of the Earth  
 went wailingly past him and said:

3 K

'I am losing the light of my Youth  
 And the Vision that led me of old,  
 And I clash with an iron Truth,  
 When I make for an Age of gold,  
 And I would that my race were run,  
 For teeming with liars, and madmen,  
 and knaves,  
 And wearied of Autocrats, Anarchs,  
 and Slaves,  
 And darken'd with doubts of a Faith  
 that saves,  
 And crimson with battles, and hollow  
 with graves,  
 To the wail of my winds, and the moan  
 of my waves  
 I whirl, and I follow the Sun.'

Was it only the wind of the Night shrill-  
 ing out Desolation and wrong  
 Thro' a dream of the dark? Yet he  
 thought that he answer'd her wail  
 with a song—

Moaning your losses, O Earth,  
 Heart-weary and overdone!  
 But all's well that ends well,  
 Whirl, and follow the Sun!

He is racing from heaven to heaven  
 And less will be lost than won,  
 For all's well that ends well,  
 Whirl, and follow the Sun!

The Reign of the Meek upon earth.  
 O weary one, has it begun?  
 But all's well that ends well,  
 Whirl, and follow the Sun!

For moans will have grown sphere-  
 music  
 Or ever your race be run!  
 And all's well that ends well,  
 Whirl, and follow the Sun!

## MECHANOPHILUS.

(In the time of the first railways.)

Now first we stand and understand,  
 And sunder false from true,  
 And handle boldly with the hand,  
 And see and shape and do.

Dash back that ocean with a pier,  
Strow yonder mountain flat,  
A railway there, a tunnel here,  
Mix me this Zone with that!

Bring me my horse—my horse? my wings  
That I may soar the sky,  
For Thought into the outward springs,  
I find her with the eye.

O will she, moonlike, sway the main,  
And bring or chase the storm,  
Who was a shadow in the brain,  
And is a living form?

Far as the Future vaults her skies,  
From this my vantage ground  
To those still-working energies  
I spy nor term nor bound.

As we surpass our fathers' skill,  
Our sons will shame our own;  
A thousand things are hidden still  
And not a hundred known.

And had some prophet spoken true  
Of all we shall achieve,  
The wonders were so wildly new  
That no man would believe.

Meanwhile, my brothers, work, and wield  
The forces of to-day,  
And plow the Present like a field,  
And garner all you may!

You, what the cultured surface grows,  
Dispense with careful hands:  
Deep under deep for ever goes,  
Heaven over heaven expands.

### RIFLEMEN FORM!

THERE is a sound of thunder afar,  
Storm in the South that darkens the day!  
Storm of battle and thunder of war!  
Well if it do not roll our way.  
Storm, Storm, Riflemen form!  
Ready, be ready against the storm!  
Riflemen, Riflemen, Riflemen form!

Be not deaf to the sound that warns,  
Be not gull'd by a despot's plea!

Are figs of thistles? or grapes of thorns?  
How can a despot feel with the Free?  
Form, Form, Riflemen Form!  
Ready, be ready to meet the storm!  
Riflemen, Riflemen, Riflemen form!

Let your reforms for a moment go!  
Look to your butts, and take good aims!  
Better a rotten borough or so  
Than a rotten fleet and a city in flames!  
Storm, Storm, Riflemen form!  
Ready, be ready against the storm!  
Riflemen, Riflemen, Riflemen form!

Form, be ready to do or die!  
Form in Freedom's name and the Queen's!  
True we have got—*such* a faithful ally  
That only the Devil can tell what he  
means.

Form, Form, Riflemen Form!  
Ready, be ready to meet the storm!  
Riflemen, Riflemen, Riflemen form!<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> I have been asked to republish this old poem, which was first published in 'The Times,' May 9, 1859, before the Volunteer movement began.

### THE TOURNEY.

RALPH would fight in Edith's sight,  
For Ralph was Edith's lover,  
Ralph went down like a fire to the fight,  
Struck to the left and struck to the right,  
Roll'd them over and over.  
'Gallant Sir Ralph,' said the king.

Casques were crack'd and hauberks  
hack'd,  
Lances snapt in sunder,  
Rang the stroke, and sprang the blood,  
Knights were thwack'd and riven, and  
hew'd

Like broad oaks with thunder.  
'O what an arm,' said the king.

Edith bow'd her stately head,  
Saw them lie confounded,  
Edith Montfort bow'd her head,  
Crown'd her knight's, and flush'd as red  
As poppies when she crown'd it.  
'Take her Sir Ralph,' said the king.

## THE BEE AND THE FLOWER.

THE bee buzz'd up in the heat.  
 'I am faint for your honey, my sweet.'  
 The flower said 'Take it my dear,  
 For now is the spring of the year.  
     So come, come!'  
     'Hum!'

And the bee buzz'd down from the heat.

And the bee buzz'd up in the cold  
 When the flower was wither'd and old.  
 'Have you still any honey, my dear?'  
 She said 'It's the fall of the year,  
     But come, come!'  
     'Hum!'

And the bee buzz'd off in the cold.

## THE WANDERER.

THE gleam of household sunshine ends,  
 And here no longer can I rest;  
 Farewell!—You will not speak, my friends,  
 Unfriendly of your parted guest.

O well for him that finds a friend,  
 Or makes a friend where'er he come,  
 And loves the world from end to end,  
 And wanders on from home to home!

O happy he, and fit to live,  
 On whom a happy home has power  
 To make him trust his life, and give  
 His fealty to the halcyon hour!

I count you kind, I hold you true;  
 But what may follow who can tell?  
 Give me a hand—and you—and you—  
 And deem me grateful, and farewell!

## POETS AND CRITICS.

THIS thing, that thing is the rage,  
 Helter-skelter runs the age;  
 Minds on this round earth of ours  
 Vary like the leaves and flowers,  
     Fashion'd after certain laws;  
 Sing thou low or loud or sweet,  
 All at all points thou canst not meet,  
     Some will pass and some will pause.

What is true at last will tell:  
 Few at first will place thee well;  
 Some too low would have thee shine,  
 Some too high—no fault of thine—  
     Hold thine own, and work thy will!  
 Year will graze the heel of year,  
 But seldom comes the poet here,  
     And the Critic's rarer still.

## A VOICE SPAKE OUT OF THE SKIES.

A VOICE spake out of the skies  
 To a just man and a wise—  
 'The world and all within it  
 Will only last a minute!'  
 And a beggar began to cry  
 'Food, food or I die!'  
 Is it worth his while to eat,  
 Or mine to give him meat,  
 If the world and all within it  
 Were nothing the next minute?

## DOUBT AND PRAYER.

THO' Sin too oft, when smitten by Thy  
     rod,  
 Rail at 'Blind Fate' with many a vain  
     'Alas!'  
 From sin thro' sorrow into Thee we pass  
 By that same path our true forefathers  
     trod;  
 And let not Reason fail me, nor the  
     sod  
 Draw from my death Thy living flower  
     and grass,  
 Before I learn that Love, which is, and  
     was  
 My Father, and my Brother, and my  
     God!  
 Steel me with patience! soften me with  
     grief!  
 Let blow the trumpet strongly while I  
     pray,  
 Till this embattled wall of unbelief  
 My prison, not my fortress, fall away!  
 Then, if thou willest, let my day be brief,  
 So Thou wilt strike Thy glory thro' the  
     day.

## FAITH.

## I.

DOUBT no longer that the Highest is the wisest and the best,  
 Let not all that saddens Nature blight thy hope or break thy rest,  
 Quail not at the fiery mountain, at the shipwreck, or the rolling  
 Thunder, or the rending earthquake, or the famine, or the pest!

## II.

Neither mourn if human creeds be lower than the heart's desire!  
 Thro' the gates that bar the distance comes a gleam of what is higher.  
 Wait till Death has flung them open, when the man will make the Maker  
 Dark no more with human hatreds in the glare of deathless fire!

## THE SILENT VOICES.\*

WHEN the dumb Hour, clothed in black, Brings the Dreams about my bed,  
 Call me not so often back,  
 Silent Voices of the dead,  
 Toward the lowland ways behind me,  
 And the sunlight that is gone!  
 Call me rather, silent voices,  
 Forward to the starry track  
 Glimmering up the heights beyond me  
 On, and always on!

## GOD AND THE UNIVERSE.

## I.

WILL my tiny spark of being wholly vanish in your deeps and heights?  
 Must my day be dark by reason, O ye Heavens, of your boundless nights,  
 Rush of Suns, and roll of systems, and your fiery clash of meteorites?

## II.

'Spirit, nearing yon dark portal at the limit of thy human state,  
 Fear not thou the hidden purpose of that Power which alone is great,  
 Nor the myriad world, His shadow, nor the silent Opener of the Gate.'

## THE DEATH OF THE DUKE OF CLARENCE AND AVONDALE.

## TO THE MOURNERS.

THE bridal garland falls upon the bier,  
 The shadow of a crown, that o'er him hung,  
 Has vanish'd in the shadow cast by Death.

So princely, tender, truthful, reverent, pure—  
 Mourn! That a world-wide Empire mourns with you,  
 That all the Thrones are clouded by your loss,  
 Were slender solace. Yet be comforted;  
 For if this earth be ruled by Perfect Love,  
 Then, after his brief range of blameless days,  
 The toll of funeral in an Angel ear  
 Sounds happier than the merriest marriage-bell.

The face of Death is toward the Sun of Life,  
 His shadow darkens earth: his truer name  
 Is 'Onward,' no discordance in the roll  
 And march of that Eternal Harmony  
 Whereto the worlds beat time, tho' faintly heard  
 Until the great Hereafter. Mourn in hope!



## CROSSING THE BAR.

SUNSET and evening star,  
And one clear call for me!  
And may there be no moaning of the bar,  
When I put out to sea,

But such a tide as moving seems asleep,  
Too full for sound and foam,  
When that which drew from out the  
boundless deep  
Turns again home.

Twilight and evening bell,  
And after that the dark!  
And may there be no sadness of fare-  
well,  
When I embark;

For tho' from out our bourne of Time  
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